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# THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR MOVEMENT

*by*  
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*Issued under the auspices of the  
Royal Institute of International Affairs*

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS  
LONDON      NEW YORK      TORONTO

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

AMEN HOUSE, E.C.4

London Edinburgh Glasgow New York  
Toronto Melbourne Wellington Bombay  
Calcutta Madras Cape Town

GEOFFREY CUMBERLEGE

PUBLISHER TO THE UNIVERSITY

*First published 1945*

*Second impression 1947*

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

## PREFACE

THIS book is not a history of the international labour movement. It is mainly concerned with the situation of the movement during the period between the two wars and with its outlook for the future.

International organisation in the labour movement began with the formation of the International Working Men's Association (the First International) in 1864. In course of time the international movement developed a political wing and an industrial wing. The British Labour Party, for example, has been associated internationally with Socialists and Social-Democrats in other countries, while the British Trades Union Congress has formed part of an international organisation with other 'trade union national centres'. Connected with these two main bodies have been a number of international associations and secretariats for special purposes. It is with this network of organisations that the present study is occupied.

Throughout its existence the international labour movement has been an object of hopes and of fears. Both have often been exaggerated. In some countries and at some periods the workers have had an almost romantic belief in 'The International' as an instrument of universal emancipation. But others have feared it as a possible agent of world-wide revolution. In fact it has been neither. Many hoped after the slaughter of 1914-1918 that the international solidarity of labour would prevent the outbreak of another war—that the workers would take their lead from the International and refuse to follow their own Governments. This hope, too, was disappointed. But the failure of the international labour movement to unite the workers of the world, to achieve their complete emancipation, and to avoid the calamity of war, has not resulted in its death. The international idea is as much alive and as vigorous as ever. In spite of disappointments the task of building up an international labour movement will be continued with renewed enthusiasm.

Critics of the International, both within the labour movement and outside it, have seized upon the obvious failures, but they were not always clear as to what they were criticising. Was it the international organisations or their constituent parts in the different countries? Were the leaders at fault or was it the rank and file? Sometimes the policy was wrong, sometimes the action was



feeble; but there were also occasions when the explanation lay in the external circumstances. Many of the disappointments—and some of the fears—were due to misunderstandings as to what the international organisations were attempting to do and what they were in fact capable of doing.

Any attempt to judge the past record of the international labour movement or to assess its future possibilities must be based on a wider knowledge of the facts. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to throw light on the position of the international labour movement by bringing together some of the essential facts and examining some of the most important problems. Of what does the international labour movement consist? What are its strong points and its weaknesses? What has been the extent of its influence? How has it been regarded? Were its activities on the whole beneficial or harmful? Should the movement be fostered or discouraged?

In the first chapter there is a brief outline of the international labour movement and of the way in which it arose. A full history has yet to be written. There have, of course, been histories, particularly of the earlier period, but there is as yet no comprehensive account covering both the political and industrial sides of the movement and bringing the story down to the outbreak of war in 1939. The first chapter of the present study is merely intended to show the present stage of development of the international labour movement and to give the main facts of the story as a background.

Then follows a description of the structure of the movement as it was built up between the two wars. The information given includes particulars of the aims and objects of the various organisations, of their membership at different periods and of the countries in which they had affiliations. The study is restricted to those international bodies with which the free trade unions and the Labour and Socialist parties are connected. These bodies are similar in their general outlook and they are more or less closely associated. The International Co-operative Alliance has been omitted, partly because the co-operative societies work in a field of their own—even though they form one of the three main branches of the labour movement—and partly because a good deal of literature on the international co-operative movement is already available. No account is given of the International Confederation of Christian Trade Unions, as the Christian or Catholic unions of which it was composed were outside the main stream of the labour movement. In some countries, however, these unions were of great importance. It is worthy of note that under the German occupation the Christian

and 'free' trade unions were frequently able to sink their differences and to co-operate intimately in the resistance movement. The Communist International and its subsidiaries have been excluded from the study, as they form an entirely separate subject. The problem of their relations with the international labour movement is, however, examined.

Two chapters are devoted to an account of the work of the principal international bodies during the period between the two wars. Writers on international Socialism and trade unionism have tended to concentrate on the spectacular questions. Much has been written about the attitude adopted by the international organisations in moments of international crisis but relatively little concerning their other activities. Many misleading judgments have been formed because too little attention was paid to what the organisations were actually trying to do.

In the last two chapters an attempt is made to examine the problems with which the international labour movement has been surrounded. It will be found that many of these problems have been met with in international work generally, e.g., in the work of the League of Nations and the International Labour Organisation. And they will continue to cause concern in the new international bodies which are now growing up.<sup>1</sup> Prominent among them are the problems of organisation. The importance of these has often been overlooked, yet their solution is vital to the success of international co-operation. It may be more attractive to consider questions of policy, but policies are of little use unless the organisation exists to carry them out. And the policies must have regard both to the possibilities of international action and to its limitations.

Other problems arise in connection with functions and methods. What purposes have the international organisations of the labour movement existed to fulfil and what changes of direction are possible or desirable? What methods have they pursued and what others are open to them? These problems are considered against a general background. The activities of the international labour movement must be seen in relation to the wider problem of promoting co-operation among the nations of the world. International action can be, on the one hand, general and political, aiming at the promotion of peace, or, on the other hand, it can be technical and special, dealing with particular

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, *The International Secretariat of the Future: Lessons from Experience by a Group of Former Officials of the League of Nations*, The Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, 1944; and *Problems of International Organisation: An Outline for Study Circles*, by R. J. P. Mortished, Workers' Educational Organisation, London, 1944.

problems and interests. Does the work of the international labour movement belong to the first or the second, or to both? And is the movement to function in a world of its own, or is it to occupy a place in the general structure of international organisation?

I should like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all those who have helped me with this study. My thanks are due to the members of the Chatham House Publications Committee, who discussed the plan of the work with me and read the manuscript, and to a number of friends in the international labour movement who made many valuable comments and suggestions. I am also indebted to my former colleagues in the Research Department of the Transport and General Workers' Union who helped with the research work and the preparation of the index.

In view of the fact that I am now serving on the staff of the International Labour Office I must make it clear that the book was almost completed before I took up my appointment. —J.P.  
*February 1945*

#### PREFACE TO SECOND IMPRESSION

Since this book was published the International Federation of Trade Unions (I.F.T.U.) has been replaced by the World Federation of Trade Unions (W.F.T.U.) The World Trade Union Conference held in London in February 1945 (see page 218) was followed in September 1945, by a second World Conference in Paris, at which a new World Federation of Trade Unions, with headquarters in Paris, was constituted. Most of the organizations which formerly belonged to the I.F.T.U. transferred their membership to the W.F.T.U., and a number of other bodies—including the Soviet trade unions and the C.I.O.—also became affiliated. The A.F. of L., however, remained outside. The constitution of the W.F.T.U. provides for the establishment of International Trade Departments to take over the work of the International Trade Secretariats, most of which had resumed their activities. Plans for setting up the International Trade Departments were examined at a conference of representatives of the W.F.T.U. and the I.T.S. which was held in Paris in December 1946. On the political side the Labour and Socialist International went out of existence. During 1946 international meetings of Socialists were held under the auspices of the Labour Party at Clacton-on-Sea and Bournemouth in continuation of the policy of resuming contacts and exchanging information (see page 217), but no steps were taken to establish a new International.

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## LIST OF ORGANISATIONS

L.S.I.	Labour and Socialist International
I.L.P.	Independent Labour Party
I.F.T.U.	International Federation of Trade Unions
A.F. of L.	American Federation of Labour
C.I.O.	Congress of Industrial Organisations
C.G.T.	Confédération générale du Travail
C.G.T.U.	Confédération générale du Travail unitaire
I.L.O.	International Labour Organisation
I.T.F.	International Transportworkers' Federation
I.C.W.F.	International Clothing Workers' Federation
I.L.F.	International Land Workers' Federation
T.U.C.	Trades Union Congress
I.B.W.W.	International Federation of Building and Wood Workers
I.F.T.W.A.	International Federation of Textile Workers' Asso- ciations
M.I.F.	Miners' International Federation
I.M.F.	International Metal Workers' Federation

industrial and political affairs. Rarely did they co-operate in the positive and constructive work of international administration with the goodwill and approval of Governments. Most Governments frowned upon them and few welcomed them as collaborators in the difficult international work of promoting industrial and social progress or developing peaceful relations between the countries of the world. Yet the appeal of internationalism amongst the workers has been strong and the idea of international friendship and co-operation has had a firm hold upon their imagination. Might it not have been possible to turn that international sentiment to greater account? May it not be that after the war the international organisations of the working class will have a large part to play in educating the peoples for peace, in promoting industrial and social prosperity, and in helping to handle the great problems of international government?

Why did the organisations of the working class feel so strongly the urge to form international links? Even when the workers of different countries have been separated by war their organisations have made efforts to remain in communication during the war and to restore full contact as soon as possible after the war was over. One reason for the strength of international feeling amongst the working-class organisations was the discovery that the economic and social problems of the workers in the various countries were similar and that the workers were at bottom striving to realise the same aims. In all countries they desired to live in peace. In all countries they faced similar difficulties in the struggle for economic security and a higher standard of well-being. Another reason for international co-operation amongst working-class organisations was the appeal of the teachings of great leaders, thinkers and statesmen who gave the organised working class its vision and inspiration. Some of these leaders were working men; others came from comfortable homes to give their lives to the service of the workers. These leaders not only showed the workers that their common problems could only be solved in the long run by international action, but also gave them an ideal to inspire them and a philosophy to guide them on their way.

#### THE FIRST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS: 1864-1889

##### a. *Formation of the First International*

The First International—the International Working Men's Association—was formed in London in 1864.<sup>1</sup> The title, the

<sup>1</sup> Gustav Jaeckh: *Die Internationale*. Leipzig, 1904.

G. M. Stekloff: *History of the First International*. Translated by Eden and Cedar Paul. International Publishers' Company, New York, 1928.

date and the place are all significant. The International, as its name implied, was an association of working men rather than of organisations. It is true that societies were invited to affiliate to it collectively, but the emphasis was on the individual to a greater extent than was the case with later international organisations. Again, although Marx was associated with the International, it did not bear the name of Socialist, nor did the words Socialism or Communism appear in its provisional rules. Its formation in 1864 was made possible by the growth of organisation amongst the workers during the first half of the century and the spread of socialist ideas, both in this country and on the Continent. The fact that it was formed in London was partly due to the circumstance that many experiments in working-class organisation had taken place in what was already the most highly industrialised country, and partly owing to the accident that a number of workers' leaders from the Continent had sought asylum in England when the workers' organisations in their own countries had been suppressed.

In Great Britain the rapid development of the factory system, and the rise of a class of wage-earners, had led the workers to combine for the purpose of protecting their wages and conditions of employment. Trade unions and other working men's societies had grown up. The Combination Acts of 1799-1800, which had prohibited the early trade unions, had been followed by the campaign which led to the repeal of those laws in 1824-1825. The repeal had opened the way for a growth in trade union membership, and in the eighteen-thirties the trade union movement had passed through a 'revolutionary period' during which the members were greatly influenced by radical and socialist ideas and by a desire to form 'one big union' for all workers. This was the period of the agitation for the Reform Bill, the Chartist movement, the Owenite experiments in socialism and the attempt to enrol workers of all trades into the 'Grand National Consolidated Trades Union' of 1834. It was succeeded by another period, in the forties and fifties, during which the unions began to adopt a 'New Model' of organisation, which gave them greater financial stability and a more permanent structure. This period also saw the beginnings of the Co-operative movement started by the Rochdale Pioneers in 1844, which in its turn exercised a profound influence over the minds of the workers.

Meanwhile developments had also been taking place on the Continent. Workers' organisations had been formed in the most

Karl Kautsky: *Sozialisten und Krieg*. Orbis-Verlag A.-G., Prague, 1937, p. 170 *et seq.*

*Founding of the First International*—A Documentary Record. Edited by L. E. Mins. International Publishers' Company, New York, 1937.



advanced industrial countries. There, too, the teachings of Socialism had spread. The workers had participated in the revolutions which had taken place in various countries in 1848, and had seen their organisations and journals destroyed when these risings were put down. Many of the working-class leaders from the continental countries had emigrated to America; some of them had taken refuge in England. Although Karl Marx had not yet published his great work on 'Capital' the Communist Manifesto had been in circulation since 1847. The lessons learned from the failure of the workers' organisations during the years of suppression, and the teachings of those who saw that the workers' problems and difficulties in the various countries were similar, led to the conclusion that some form of organised international co-operation was necessary.

It was, however, the Polish war of liberation against Tsarist Russia that provided the immediate occasion for the formation of an international organisation. Representatives of the French workers attended meetings in London in 1863 to join in demonstrations in favour of the Polish cause.<sup>1</sup> Contacts were maintained, and in the following year the inaugural meeting of the First International took place.

#### b. *The 'Address' to Working Men*

The situation as it appeared to the founders of the First International was described in vivid language in the famous 'Address'<sup>2</sup> to working men which was prefaced to the Provisional Rules of the Association. The 'Address' analysed the conditions of the workers, claimed that previous attempts to improve their lot had been frustrated because of the lack of co-ordination between the efforts of the workers' organisations in the various countries, and drew the conclusion that combined international action by the workers would have to be developed.

In the opening sentence of the Address the workers' attention was directed to the central problem: 'It is a great fact that the misery of the working masses has not diminished from 1848 to 1864, and yet this period is unrivalled for the development of its industry and the growth of its commerce.' The remarks made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Gladstone) on April 7th, 1864, about the rapid increase in the British import and export trades were contrasted with Government reports on the poor health and low standard of living of the working people.

<sup>1</sup> L. E. Mins: *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> *Address and Provisional Rules of the International Working Men's Association, London, September 26th, 1864.* Published by the Labour and Socialist International for the Celebration of the 60th Anniversary, 1924.

A full half of the Address was devoted to this contrast, because 'England heads the Europe of Commerce and Industry'.

It was then pointed out that, 'with local colours changed, and on a scale somewhat contracted', the facts relating to England reproduced themselves in all the industrial countries of the continent. In all of them there had been, since 1848, 'an unheard-of development of industry, and an undreamed-of expansion of imports and exports'. In all of them, as in England, real wages had advanced somewhat for a minority of the workers, but for the majority the rise in money wages had not brought any real access of comfort. Everywhere the great mass of the workers were sinking to a lower level at least as fast as those above them were rising in the social scale. 'In all countries of Europe,' said the authors of the Address, 'it has now become a truth demonstrable to every unprejudiced mind, and only denied by those whose interest it is to hedge other people in a fools' paradise, that no improvement of machinery, no appliance of science to production, no contrivances of communication, no new colonies, no emigration, no opening of markets, no free trade, nor all these things put together, will do away with the miseries of the industrious masses; but that, on the present false base, every fresh development of the productive powers of labour must tend to deepen social contrasts and point social antagonisms.'

Such was the view that presented itself to the founders of the First International when they compared the scene in 1864 with that of 1848. They felt that one reason for the contradiction between the expanding trade and the falling standards of living for the workers was that working people in Britain and the countries on the Continent had not taken common action to improve their conditions. They pointed out that after the failure of the Revolutions of 1848 'all party organisations and party journals of the working classes were, on the Continent, crushed by the iron hand of force', and asserted that the defeat of the continental workers 'soon spread its contagious effects to this side of the channel'. All the efforts made to keep the Chartist Movement in being 'failed signally', and the press organs of the working class 'died one by one of the apathy of the masses'. This inspired the founders of the First International to the melancholy reflection that if there had been 'no solidarity of action between the British and the continental working classes there was, at all events, a solidarity of defeat'.

From the picture thus presented certain conclusions were drawn. The first was that the great duty of the working class was to conquer political power. To the founders of the First International the period from 1848 to 1864 had proved beyond

doubt that co-operative labour would never 'free the masses' nor even 'perceptibly lighten the burden of their miseries' if it were fostered only by the casual efforts of the workers themselves. It needed to be developed to national dimensions and by national means. But Marx and his friends believed that 'the lords of the land and the lords of capital' would always use their political privileges for the defence and perpetuation of their economic monopolies. Far from promoting the emancipation of labour they would continue to lay every possible impediment in its way. Hence the conclusion that the conquest of political power had become the great duty of the working class. It seemed indeed that the workers had understood this, for 'simultaneous revivals' had taken place in England, Germany, Italy and France, and simultaneous efforts were being made at political reorganisation.

Another conclusion followed. It was that although the workers had numbers on their side these numbers needed to be 'united by combination and led by knowledge'. Experience had shown that disregard of the bond of brotherhood which ought to exist between the workers of different countries would be 'chastised by the common discomfiture of their incoherent efforts'.

One further point was brought out. This was in connection with foreign policy. How could the workers in the different countries help one another to achieve emancipation if the foreign policies of their Governments played upon national prejudices, 'squandering in piratical wars the people's blood and treasure'? Events had taught the workers the duty 'to master themselves the mysteries of international politics'. They would need to watch the diplomatic acts of their respective Governments; to counteract them, if necessary, by all means in their power; to combine in simultaneous denunciations when unable to prevent actions of which they disapproved; and 'to vindicate the simple laws of morals and justice, which ought to govern the relations of private individuals, as the rules paramount to the intercourse of nations'.<sup>1</sup> The fight for such a foreign policy was declared to be a part of the general struggle for the emancipation of the working class. The Address ended with the now famous call: 'Proletarians of all countries, Unite!'

Such were the conditions in which the First International was founded, and such were the considerations which weighed with those who helped to bring it into being.

<sup>1</sup> In view of the present-day totalitarian theory that lying, treachery, and the ruthless use of superior force are permissible in the service of the State, it is worthy of note that the international Socialists of three-quarters of a century ago should have proclaimed that nations should be governed by the same principles of justice and morality as individuals.

### *c. Background of the First International*

Before the foundation of the First International there had been other attempts to start some form of international working-class organisation, but none of them left such lasting impressions on working-class history. For example, international organisations had been formed in London by Chartists and fugitives from oppression on the Continent—the Fraternal Democrats between 1846 and 1853 and the International Committee in 1854–1855. But these were no more than small local associations. There had also been the Communist League, likewise founded in London. This body, which was much influenced by Marx and Engels, consisted mainly of German workers, though those of other nationalities were admitted to membership. All these organisations died out during the period of reaction which followed the revolutions of 1848. The First International was the first of the international organisations whose significance was more than local and transitory.

But even the First International was born before its time. It represented an attempt to establish organisation on an international scale before the workers had developed solid organisations in their respective countries. The First International was formed by a few enthusiasts and was not a combination of parties or trade unions representing the masses of workers. At that time there were, in fact, no great labour and socialist parties. It was in the trade union sphere that the labour movement had built up its most solid organisations. Yet it was on the political side that the first international association was established. In England there was as yet no Labour Party, nor were there any independent Labour Members of Parliament. It was not until 1900 that the Labour Representation Committee—the forerunner of the Labour Party—was formed on the initiative of the Trades Union Congress. Even the T.U.C. itself was not in existence when the First International was born. Not until four years later—in 1868—was the first Trades Union Congress held. Similarly on the Continent; the trade union movement was in its beginnings but the first Socialist parties did not emerge until the First International was already on the wane.

Only in a few countries were there any Social-Democratic or Labour Parties in existence during the lifetime of the First International. In Germany a Social-Democratic Party was formed in 1875 by a fusion of Lassalle's General German Workers' Association (1863) and the Social-Democratic Labour Party—the so-called Eisenacher (1869). In 1871 the Social-Democratic Party was started in Denmark. A Czechoslovakian

Social-Democratic Labour Party was founded in 1872, while the Czech minority in Vienna set up a Social-Democratic Labour Party of their own in 1876. In 1875 a Socialist Party was founded in Portugal.

d. *The Provisional Rules*

The provisional rules of the First International extended membership to individuals as well as to organisations. For individuals the contribution was one shilling per annum, with one penny for the membership card.<sup>1</sup> Trade, friendly, and any other working men's societies were invited to join in their corporate capacity on condition that they accepted the principles of the Association and paid not less than five shillings for the declaration of their enrolment ('varnished and mounted on canvas and roller'). No contributions were demanded from the affiliated societies. They were left to contribute or not, at their discretion and according to their means. Each affiliated society was entitled to be represented on the Central Council.

Among the objects of the International, as set out in the Provisional Rules, prominence was given to the provision of a means of communication and co-operation between working men's organisations in the various countries. This has remained one of the principal objects of the international labour movement ever since. A preamble to the Provisional Rules declared that the economic emancipation of the workers was the great end to which every political movement should be subordinated as a means; that all efforts towards that end had hitherto failed for lack of solidarity amongst the workers in each country and of 'a fraternal bond of union' between workers of different countries; and that the emancipation of labour was neither a local nor a national, but a social, problem. The revival of the working classes, then taking place in the 'most industrious countries of Europe', raised new hope, but at the same time gave a solemn warning against a relapse into the old errors and called for 'the immediate combination of the still disconnected movements'.

Accordingly, the first of the Provisional Rules declared that the Association was established to afford a central medium of communication and co-operation between 'working men's

<sup>1</sup> A photograph of the card of membership issued to Engels was printed in the souvenirs prepared for the Congress which it was intended to hold in Vienna in 1914 and for the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the International in London in 1924. The card certified that: 'Frederick Engels was admitted a member of the International Working Men's Association' and was signed by members from a number of the countries associated with the International.

societies existing in different countries and aiming at the same end—the protection, advancement, and complete emancipation of the working classes'. A General Working Men's Congress, consisting of representatives of societies joining the Association, was to be held in Belgium in 1865 'to proclaim before Europe the common aspirations of the working classes', to adopt rules in their final form, to organise the work of the Association and to appoint a Central Council.

The rule relating to the work of the Central Council is noteworthy because it described the tasks of an international organisation as they appeared to the pioneers. It provided for four forms of action—an exchange of information so that workers in one country might be constantly informed of the activities of workers in every other country; a simultaneous enquiry under a common direction into social conditions in the different countries in Europe; the ventilation in all countries of questions of general interest which might arise in any particular country; and simultaneous and uniform action by the affiliated societies when immediate practical steps were called for, as, for instance, in the case of international disputes. It was further provided that the Central Council should take the initiative in making proposals to be laid before the different national or local societies.

These provisions are worth recalling for the further reason that they relate to activities which had to be undertaken by the later international organisations as well.

The activities and preoccupations of the International were what might have been expected from the circumstances in which it lived. International Conferences were held at Geneva in 1866, Lausanne 1867, Brussels 1868, Basle 1869 and The Hague 1872. During this short period the great difficulty was to agree on the methods to be adopted in the struggle for emancipation. Even at this early stage it was evident that the outlook and action of the members in the international sphere was influenced by the conditions in their respective countries—a factor which has always affected international co-operation, both in the labour movement and in general.

Thus while there was agreement on the need to promote the formation of trade unions there were sharp differences of opinion on the subject of political action. In Great Britain and Prussia, for example, the members of the International took part in the struggle for universal suffrage: one of the results of which was the passing of the Representation of the People Act in 1867, which enfranchised the town worker. But in countries such as France, Italy and Spain the members had no belief in parliamentary action by the workers because they had no confidence

in their parliaments. They pinned their faith to other forms of action, ranging from the formation of trade unions, co-operative societies and credit banks to direct revolutionary activities aiming at armed insurrection. Marx was one of those who favoured parliamentary methods and the struggle for the franchise, provided that the workers could be represented by an independent political party of their own. But the differences of opinion in the International were too great. Divided on such fundamental questions and lacking a sound basis of organisation in the different countries, the International was unable to hold together and a fresh start had to be made. After having been in existence for only a few years the association broke up at The Hague Conference in 1872.

Then followed an intermediate period. Bakunin, the anarchist leader, formed a new organisation, while Marx transferred the seat of the First International to New York. A further Conference was held at Geneva in 1873, but in 1876 the association was formally wound up in Philadelphia.<sup>1</sup> Anarchist Conferences were held at Geneva 1873, Brussels 1874, Berne 1876 and Verviers 1877, after which this movement too died away. Socialist Conferences were held at Ghent 1877, Chur 1881, and Paris in both 1883 and 1886, but none of these led to the formation of a new international organisation.<sup>2</sup>

#### THE SECOND TWENTY-FIVE YEARS: 1889-1914

##### a. *Foundation of the Second International*

The idea of international co-operation among the working class had, however, taken a firm hold, and by 1889 it was possible to begin again. In July of that year two international congresses—one Marxist and the other organised by the 'Possibilists'—were held in Paris. The Marxist congress was attended by some four hundred delegates, and it was from this gathering that the Second International emerged into the world of international politics.<sup>3</sup> By this time the number of Labour and Socialist parties and groups had grown. The Spanish Socialist Party was founded in 1879, the Belgian Labour Party in 1885, the Austrian Social-Democratic Labour Party and the Swiss Socialist Party in 1888, and the Swedish Social-Democratic Labour Party in 1889.

Other parties followed during the eighteen-nineties, in

<sup>1</sup> *Internationale Arbeiter-Assoziation—Verhandlung der Delegirten-Konferenz zu Philadelphia, 15 Juli 1876*. Amtliche Ausgabe, New York, 1876.

<sup>2</sup> C. M. Stekloff: *op. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> *Protokoll des Internationalen Arbeiter-Congresses zu Paris 1889. Mit einem Vorwort von Wilhelm Liebknecht*, Nürnberg, 1890.

Karl Kautsky: *op. cit.*, p. 295 *et seq.*

Armenia and the Ukraine (1890), Argentina, Italy, and Poland (1892), Bulgaria (1893), Holland (Social-Democratic Party) and Hungary (1894), Lithuania (1896), Russia (1898), Finland and Georgia (1899). The I.L.P. in Great Britain was founded in 1893, and in Poland the General Jewish Labour Union (the 'Bund') was formed in 1897. As already stated, it was not until 1900 that the Labour Party was constituted in Great Britain, though for some years previously political action had been undertaken by the trade unions. Groups of Socialists appeared at an early date in France, but it was not until 1905 that the French Socialist Party was formed by a unification of their forces.

Congresses of the International were to be held, as a rule, every three years. To carry on the work of the International between Congresses it was decided, at the London Congress of 1896, to consider the possibility of instituting an International Secretariat. This was established at the Paris Congress in 1900, together with an International Socialist Bureau. The Bureau was to meet at least once a year, and it was composed of two delegates from each national section and one delegate from each parliamentary group. Emile Vandervelde was the President. The first Secretary was Victor Serwy, of the Belgian National Federation of Co-operatives, who was succeeded by Camille Huysmans. There was also an Executive Committee which consisted of the representatives from Belgium. The Secretariat was situated in Brussels.<sup>1</sup>

The problems of the Second International were concerned with the unification of the forces of the working class, the attitude to be adopted towards collaboration with other parties and towards participation in Governments, and the action to be taken in the event of war. These were amongst the principal subjects discussed at the International Congresses held between 1889 and the outbreak of war in 1914. The Paris Congress of 1889 was followed by Congresses in Brussels 1891, Zurich 1893, London 1896, Paris 1900, Amsterdam 1904, Stuttgart 1907 and Copenhagen 1910. A special Congress took place at Basle in 1912 and another ordinary Congress was due to be held in Vienna in October 1914, when the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the First International would have been celebrated. This, however, did not take place. Instead there was an eleventh-hour meeting of the International Socialist Bureau in Brussels on July 29th and 30th, 1914, before the outbreak of war.

<sup>1</sup> *Compte rendu sténographique non-officiel de la version française du cinquième Congrès Socialiste International, Paris, 1900. Cahiers de la Quinzaine, Paris 1901. Septième Congrès Socialiste International, Stuttgart 1907. Compte rendu analytique publié par le Secrétariat du Bureau Socialiste International, Bruxelles 1908.*



Debates on problems of Socialist doctrine were a feature of these Congresses. Questions of theory were given greater prominence in those early days than in more recent times, when the movement was faced with decisions on immediate practical issues of Government policy. At the Congresses of the Second International the delegates debated and proclaimed their faith, but after the war of 1914-1918 the need was for action in concrete situations. Problems of doctrine, however, have continued to be important. Socialists approach these questions from different angles, and the possibility of agreement on action and tactics is still largely influenced by differences of attitude on doctrine and theory.<sup>1</sup>

One of the issues on which the International had to clear its mind was the question whether anarchists and those who opposed parliamentary methods should be allowed to take part in its proceedings. The 1889 Congress was attended by anarchists and opponents of parliamentary action as well as by Social-Democrats, but the anarchists were refused admission at the London Congress in 1896.<sup>2</sup> Consideration was then given to the qualifications for the admission of delegates and after four years of discussion the Paris Congress of 1900 laid down conditions under which anarchists and anti-parliamentarians were excluded. Trade unionists were, however, to be admitted, provided that they recognised the class struggle. These early gatherings were in fact, international socialist 'and trade union' congresses.

As in the case of the First International the problem of unifying the forces of the workers in the various countries occupied a good deal of the attention of the Second International. The question presented itself in different forms in different countries. It was not simply a matter of enrolling the workers into an independent working-class party in each country, but of overcoming the differences between the parties which were competing for the workers' support. In some countries there were several parties or groups and the Second International had to endeavour to promote unity in the separate countries as well as to unite

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter III, p. 74, and Chapter IV, p. 117.

<sup>2</sup> *Verhandlungen und Beschlüsse des Internationalen Arbeiter-und-Gewerkschafts-Kongresses, London 1896*, Berlin 1896. There was great excitement at the London Congress as at some of the others. Charles Lindley, who afterwards became President of the International Transportworkers' Federation, refers in his history of the Swedish transport workers to the great opposition at the London Congress between the two groups in France—the followers of Guesde and the Allemanists—who had to be separated in the Conference Hall to prevent them from coming to blows. He speaks also of the hard struggle with the syndicalist groups led by Domela Nieuwenhuys (Holland) who had been excluded from the Congress but tried to crowd into the gallery in order to create disturbances. Charles Lindley: *Svenska Transportarbetare-förbundet. Historik. Första Delen, 1897-1922*. Stockholm, 1943, p. 35.

the parties of the various countries in one international organisation.

### b. *Socialist Participation in Government*

Again, as in the case of the First International, the methods to be adopted in the struggle for power were a subject of acute controversy, though here there was a new aspect to consider—the question of Socialist participation in Governments. Having eliminated the anarchists and anti-parliamentary elements, the International had to face the implications of parliamentary action and the struggle for the franchise. The promotion of working-class candidates naturally led to a situation in which Labour and Socialist parties were obliged to ask themselves whether they could collaborate with the other parties in parliamentary work and whether Socialists could be permitted to join Governments formed and led by other parties. An actual case arose in 1889 in France when Millerand, who was at that time a Socialist, accepted office in the Waldeck-Rousseau Government. Socialist opinion in France was divided on the issue, and in 1900 the principle was discussed at the International Congress. A compromise solution was found on the basis of a motion put forward by Karl Kautsky, a representative of the radical wing, which allowed for the possibility of Socialist participation in Governments in exceptional cases, while rejecting it as a general practice. By this decision the International avoided condemning the action of a section of the French Socialist movement, but registered its feeling that Socialists should, in principle, avoid membership of Governments with other parties.

Four years later the matter was carried a stage further. In the interval the German Social-Democratic Party had committed themselves at their Dresden Conference in September 1903 by adopting a resolution which condemned collaboration with other parties, and also the policy of 'revisionism' and 'reformism'. A resolution on these lines was tabled at the International Congress in Amsterdam in 1904 and carried. An amendment which sought to avoid condemning the ministerial participation in France was lost, but even this amendment would have advocated non-collaboration as a principle.<sup>1</sup>

This was one of the historical struggles between opposing

<sup>1</sup> The Amsterdam resolution declared that 'Social-Democracy can accept no participation in the Government under bourgeois society, this decision being in accordance with the Kautsky resolution passed at the International Congress of Paris in 1900'. *International Socialist Congress, Amsterdam 1904. Resolutions*, Brussels 1905. See also *Sixième Congrès Socialiste International, Amsterdam 1904. Compte rendu analytique. Publié par le Secrétariat Socialiste International*, Bruxelles 1904. This was the first official congress report.

points of view. In favour of 'participation' were the French Socialist leader Jaurès and the German revisionist Bernstein, while on the other side were the uncompromising Marxists led by Bebel and Kautsky. In spite of the Amsterdam decision Socialist participation in Governments was later to become an accepted practice.

### c. *War and Peace*

From this time onwards the International gave increasing attention to the problems of war and peace. Methods of avoiding war were considered and also the attitude to be adopted by workers in the event of the outbreak of war. Amongst other things the possibility of a general strike against war was mentioned. At the Stuttgart Congress in 1907 a famous resolution was carried on militarism and international disputes. It declared it to be the duty of the International to strengthen and co-ordinate the opposition of the workers to war. If war threatened, the workers and their parliamentary representatives in the countries concerned were to make every effort, with the support of the International, to prevent its outbreak. 'If war should nevertheless break out' they were to help to bring it quickly to an end and to strive with all their might to use the resulting economic and political crisis in order to rouse the people and thus hasten the downfall of capitalist class domination.<sup>1</sup>

As the years went by, and the dangers of war grew more acute, the International became more and more preoccupied with the question of preventing war and of ensuring that the workers of the various countries should take united action against war if it should prove to be unavoidable. But hostilities broke out nevertheless, the workers in different countries were swept into the service of the war machine, and another chapter in the history of the international labour movement came to a sudden end. This was just fifty years after the founders of the First International had asked in their 'Address' how the workers could co-operate in the struggle for emancipation in the face of the foreign policy of Governments!

### d. *Industrial Subjects*

Both the First and Second Internationals were political bodies. They were formed with the object of achieving power for the workers in the political sphere before any international trade

<sup>1</sup> *Septième Congrès Socialiste International, Stuttgart 1907. Compte rendu analytique publié par le Secrétariat du Bureau Socialiste International, Bruxelles 1908.*

union organisations were founded to promote the workers' industrial interests. At that time the British trade unions, for example, were still in the main composed of skilled workers and were still on the whole in the friendly society stage. It was only in the eighteen-eighties that the 'new unionism' of the unskilled worker, with its small contributions, mass membership, and militant policy, began to broaden the basis and increase the drive of the trade union movement. The year of the Paris Congress, 1889, was in fact the year of the great dock strike in London which brought the 'new unionism' into the centre of the picture. Both the First and Second Internationals, however, discussed questions which would now be classed as primarily industrial, though they have their political aspects as well. Thus at the very beginning the First International adopted resolutions on problems of the trade union and co-operative movements. Again, at the Paris Congress, which led to the formation of the Second International, considerable attention was given to the problem of achieving an eight-hour day, with the result that an international demonstration in favour of the eight-hour day was held on May 1st, 1890—the first of the May Day Demonstrations which afterwards became a regular event. There has in fact been a close connection between the political and industrial sides of the international labour movement from the beginning.

#### *e. International Trade Union Organisation*

Towards the close of the century attempts were made to establish international working-class organisations in the industrial field. In 1889, for example, the leather workers' unions formed an international federation, while in the eighteen-nineties international organisations were formed by the miners, glass workers, clothing workers, typographers, metal workers, textile workers, lithographers, tobacco workers and transport workers. These bodies were confined to unions in specific trades or industries and became known as International Trade Secretariats.

Some of the contacts between trade unionists of different industries were made at the Congresses of the Second International which, it will be remembered, were attended by representatives of trade unions as well as by delegates from Socialist parties. Charles Lindley, President of the International Transportworkers' Federation, describes, for example, the preliminary meeting of transport workers held just prior to the 'International Socialist and Trade Union Congress' in London in 1896, which led to the formation of the I.T.F. in the following year.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Charles Lindley, *op. cit.*, pp. 34, 41, 53.

Meanwhile discussions were going forward with a view to the formation of an International to comprise the central trade union organisations of the different countries. In 1888 the Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress had called a conference in London which was attended by 123 delegates representing 850,000 British and 250,000 continental workers.<sup>1</sup> This initiative, however, was not followed up. In 1900 a second attempt to promote international co-operation between trade union centres was made by the French trade unions. A Conference attended by British, French and Italian delegates was held in Paris in December of that year and consideration was given to the possibility of setting up an international secretariat as a preliminary to the foundation of a trade union International. This plan, however, likewise fell through.<sup>2</sup>

#### *f. International Federation of Trade Unions*

It was in 1901 that the first practical results were achieved. Since 1886 the workers' organisations of the Scandinavian countries had been holding joint meetings attended by political and trade union delegates from Norway, Sweden and Denmark, and one of these meetings was due to take place at Copenhagen in 1901.<sup>3</sup> In 1900 the President of the Danish trade unions attended a Conference of the British General Federation of Trade Unions and had conversations about the need for an international association of the national trade union centres. Subsequently he got into touch with the President of the German trade unions. As a result of these discussions it was found possible to hold the first international conference of the trade union centres at Copenhagen in August 1901 and to take the first steps towards the foundation of an international organisation which in 1913 became the International Federation of Trade Unions.

At first the international work of the central trade union organisations was confined to periodical meetings of secretaries from the various countries. Although Legien, Secretary of the German trade unions, undertook the international secretarial duties, it was some years before a definite international secretariat was built up. Meanwhile Legien was known as the International Secretary of the National Centres of the Trade Unions. Only in 1913 did the unions feel able to adopt a name—the International Federation of Trade Unions—which implied the exist-

<sup>1</sup> J. Sassenbach: *Twenty-five Years of International Trade Unionism*. International Federation of Trade Unions, Amsterdam, 1926, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> J. Sassenbach, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Such meetings were still being held when war broke out in 1939. At times they were extended to include delegates from Iceland and Finland.

ence of a permanent organisation.<sup>1</sup> Before then the International meetings had been described as International Conferences of Trade Union Secretaries, and it was not until after the war that these small gatherings of officials were replaced by full scale congresses of delegates.

The first international conference of the trade union centres in 1901 was followed by another at Stuttgart in 1902. This was held at the same time as the conference of the German trade unions and the German organisations agreed to act as the international centre for the time being. It was at the third conference held in Dublin in 1903, that Legien was authorised to act as international secretary. The tasks of the Trade Union International as laid down in 1902 were similar to those outlined for the Central Council of the First International nearly forty years earlier. It was agreed at Stuttgart that no special international bureau was to be established but that the national centre of one of the countries should so act.<sup>2</sup> Germany was chosen. The duties of the international centre were to form a permanent link between the trade unions of the different countries; to undertake the exchange of information and documents; to make available translations of legislation and other material likely to be of international interest; to begin the preparation of uniform trade union statistics; and to arrange the provision of mutual assistance in industrial disputes.<sup>3</sup>

At the Fourth Conference in Amsterdam in 1905 the members were faced with the problem of the attitude to be adopted by the unions towards the so-called theoretical questions of trade unionism and towards great political issues. The French national centre had asked for the inclusion in the agenda for the Amsterdam Conference of the problems of anti-militarism, the general strike and the eight-hour day, but after consulting the other centres Legien had turned down the request, with the result that the French refused to attend. By giving its attention to these questions the organisation would, of course, have considerably widened the scope of its business, and that it was not yet prepared to do. It preferred to leave general questions to the Congresses of the Second International. In fact, the Conference re-defined its work by declaring that future international conferences should deliberate concerning the promotion of closer association between the trade unions in all countries; the collection of uniform trade statistics; the provision of mutual support in industrial disputes; and other questions directly relating to trade

<sup>1</sup> Sassenbach, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> Sassenbach, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

<sup>3</sup> Sassenbach, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

union organisation. Theoretical questions and questions affecting the policy of the trade unions in their own countries were to be ruled out.<sup>1</sup>

Two years later, at the Christiania Conference, the French trade unions again refused to attend unless these questions could be discussed. They asked that the next Conference should examine the possibility of organising international workers' congresses at which such problems could be debated.<sup>2</sup> At the Paris Conference in 1909 they returned to the subject and urged that the conference should be replaced by wider congresses of delegates at which general questions could be considered by the trade unions in their own circle, instead of in the international political sphere.<sup>3</sup> Other centres opposed the suggestion and stressed the need for the workers' organisations to carry on the trade union and political struggle jointly. The proposal was withdrawn though the French delegates remained unconvinced.<sup>4</sup> In later years joint action by the political and trade union organisations became a feature of their international work.

Like the Second International the I.F.T.U. was concerned to promote working class unity. Accordingly the I.F.T.U. set its face against the inclusion of more than one trade union centre from each country. At its third Conference in 1903 it was agreed that individual trade unions should not be represented but only the national centres. In 1905 a problem arose regarding the representation from Austria. A separate centre had been set up by the Czech trade unions in Bohemia and a request was made for their recognition alongside the national centre of the Austrian unions. Recognition was refused by the conference and the Czech representative was only allowed to attend as a fraternal delegate.<sup>5</sup> Again, in 1911, questions arose regarding the representation from Bulgaria and the representatives of one of these were admitted as fraternal delegates. In the case of the United States of America an application for admission had been received from the I.W.W., but this was rejected because the A.F. of L. had already become affiliated. The I.F.T.U. maintained the line

<sup>1</sup> Sassenbach, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Sassenbach, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

<sup>3</sup> In addition to the subjects already mentioned (see above, p. 11), the Second International had discussed at its Congresses since 1900 such questions as international legislation for curtailing the working day, emancipation of labour by co-operative as well as political and trade union action, the organisation of seamen, and the general strike (1900); social policy and labour insurance, and the general strike (1904); workers' immigration and emigration, and relations between political parties and trade unions (1907).

<sup>4</sup> Sassenbach, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

<sup>5</sup> It will be remembered that on the political side the Czech workers in Vienna had set up a Social-Democratic Labour Party of their own before the foundation of the Austrian Social-Democratic Labour Party (see above, p. 8).

that only one national centre could be accepted from each country at its conference in 1913, when the difference in Bulgaria was still unsettled.

At the Zurich Conference in 1913 a further step towards united action was taken by the admission for the first time of fraternal delegates from the International Trade Secretariats. After the war this practice was resumed and joint conferences of the International Trade Secretariats and the General Council of the I.F.T.U. were organised for the discussion of matters of common concern. It was at Zurich, too, that the British Trades Union Congress was represented for the first time. Till then the British representatives had come from the General Federation of Trade Unions, though this was not the national centre. At Zurich, however, the I.F.T.U. representatives were joined by C. W. Bowerman, Secretary of the Parliamentary Committee of the T.U.C. This was the last conference before the war.

#### THE THIRD TWENTY-FIVE YEARS: 1914-1939

The I.F.T.U.—like the Second International in the political field—was shattered by the war of 1914-1918. The same happened to the International Trade Secretariats. Efforts were made to maintain contacts between the workers' organisations in the belligerent countries through those which remained neutral, but it was impossible to keep up any effective communications, much less to maintain the organisations in being and to carry on any positive international activities. After the war the workers' movements, both political and industrial, were confronted with the necessity for making a fresh start. This involved not merely picking up the threads again—a task difficult enough in itself—but overcoming the misunderstandings and antagonisms that had been engendered by the war.

##### *a. Resumption of Activities*

One by one the International Trade Secretariats were re-started, beginning with the International Transportworkers' Federation early in 1919.<sup>1</sup> In the case of the I.F.T.U., proposals had been made during the war for the removal of the headquarters to a neutral country, and when the I.F.T.U. was re-constituted its headquarters were set up at Amsterdam. A Conference attended by French, British, Belgian and Italian delegates was held at Leeds in 1916. Another was held at Stock-

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter IV, p. 145.



holm in June 1917, with representatives from Austria, Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Holland, Hungary, Norway and Sweden, but not from the countries represented at Leeds.<sup>1</sup> A further Conference was held at Berne in October 1917 and another at Berne in February 1919 on the occasion of the International Socialist Conference.<sup>2</sup> The first full International Trade Union Congress held after the war took place at Amsterdam from July 28th to August 2nd, 1919, and it was at this Congress that the work of the I.F.T.U. as an organisation was restarted.<sup>3</sup>

On the political side the picture was more complicated. Here, too, attempts were made by Camille Huysmans, Secretary of the International Socialist Bureau, and others to hold the organisation together, but only very slender contacts could be maintained. Conferences of allied Socialists were, however, held; international conferences took place at Zimmerwald in 1915 and Kienthal in 1916; and attempts were made to organise a conference at Stockholm in 1917.<sup>4</sup> After the war conferences with the object of re-establishing the Second International were held at Berne in 1919 and at Geneva in 1920.<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile a new difficulty had arisen as a result of the formation of the Third International in Moscow in March 1919. This was an organisation established on the initiative of the Russians and inspired by the Russian Revolution. Its aim was to gain the allegiance of the workers in all countries for the Communist cause, and this it could only achieve by detaching them from the old Labour and Socialist parties. The fact that so many of the workers and their leaders sympathised with the Russian workers and peasants, and wished both to assist and to copy them, caused serious divisions in the international field and among the working class organisations in the various countries. Alongside the Communist International (or Comintern)—which was a political body—the Communists also started other organisations such as the Red International of Labour Unions (the Profintern) which competed with the trade unions in the industrial field.

A further complication arose from the fact that certain parties (including the Austrian, French and Swiss Parties, the British I.L.P. and the German Independent Socialist Party) did not

<sup>1</sup> Sassenbach, *op. cit.*, pp. 52-57.

<sup>2</sup> See next paragraph.

<sup>3</sup> Sassenbach, *op. cit.*, pp. 57-70.

<sup>4</sup> Karl Kautsky, *op. cit.*, p. 527 *et seq.*

<sup>5</sup> *Labour and Socialist International*. Bulletin of the International, New Series No. 3, June 1922. See also the detailed accounts by Brand and van der Slice. Carl F. Brand: *British Labour's Rise to Power*. Stanford University Press, 1941. Austin van der Slice: *International Labour, Diplomacy and Peace 1914-1919*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 1941.

wish to belong to either the Second or the Third International. These organisations formed an International Working Union of Socialist Parties, which became known as the Vienna Union or the Two-and-a-Half International. In an endeavour to form an all inclusive International, a meeting of the executives of the Second and Third Internationals and the Vienna Union was held in Berlin in 1922. So great were the differences revealed at that meeting, however, that any idea of uniting the three bodies in one organisation had to be dropped.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless the effort to achieve unity among the Labour and Socialist parties was continued. On the one hand a new attempt was made to restart the International, while on the other hand appeals were made for the greatest possible unity of organisation in the individual countries. In December 1922 a meeting of representatives of the Second International and the Vienna Union was held at The Hague, and as a result an invitation was extended to all Labour and Socialist parties to attend an international congress. This congress was held in Hamburg in May 1923 and on its eve both parties undertook that if a new International was formed as a result of this initiative, they would announce their dissolution immediately. The Congress was attended by 620 delegates representing thirty countries, and it adopted a constitution for a new Labour and Socialist International (L.S.I.)<sup>2</sup>—though this was really the continuation of the Second International under a different name. It was significant that one of the principal objects of the new International was to bring about a complete unification of the international Labour and Socialist movement, that it affirmed its desire to maintain a close connection with the I.F.T.U. (and the International Co-operative Alliance) and that its constitution ended with an appeal to all workers to assist in promoting Socialist unity in each country and in the International.

Thus by 1923 the principal working class international organisations in the industrial and political field had been either re-started or replaced by new ones. But once again the development of international co-operation was interrupted by war. The hostilities which broke out in the late summer of 1939 found the L.S.I. already seriously handicapped by the difficulty of securing agreement on a policy acceptable to the parties of all countries in the face of increasing international tension. A few meetings of its leading members were held in the early months of the war

<sup>1</sup> *The Second and Third Internationals and the Vienna Union.* Official Report of the Conference between the Executives, held at the Reichstag, Berlin, 1922. Labour Publishing Company, London, 1922.

<sup>2</sup> *Resolutions of the Labour and Socialist Congress held at Hamburg 21-25 May, 1923.* Published by the Labour and Socialist International, 1923.

but even these ceased after the collapse of France.<sup>1</sup> On the industrial side the I.F.T.U. was severely hampered, especially after the French disaster, but from 1941 onwards it found itself able to develop its activities again, though on a very much restricted scale.<sup>2</sup>

### *b. Inter-War Problems*

The international political and industrial organisations, some newly formed and others reconstituted after the war of 1914-1918, began their work in the atmosphere of a post-war world, but before many years had passed were confronted by the problems caused by the approach of a new war. Instead of giving way to the anticipated era of peace and ordered relations, the post-war years merged into an inter-war period with problems more complicated and dangerous than ever.

One of the features of the inter-war period was that the two wings of the international labour movement were thrown into closer association, just as were the political and industrial organisations of the workers in the separate countries. Allowing for the fact that the L.S.I. was composed of Labour and Socialist parties, and the I.F.T.U. of trade unions, there was a pronounced similarity in the problems with which they had to contend. This is not to say that their problems were identical. To over-emphasise the resemblance would be to ignore the very real differences in the work and problems of the two bodies. Nevertheless while each had to deal with questions arising in its own specific field of activity, both had to take account of similar difficulties in the sphere of organisation and in the conduct of their activities.

On both the political and industrial sides the main preoccupation of the international organisations in the first years of their new life was to help in clearing up the mess left over from the war, and to lay the foundations for a lasting peace. It was a task that was never completed. Many meetings and conferences were held, committees sat, solutions were propounded and advocated by the sections of the international labour movement in various countries, but the statesmanship of the world was unequal to the burden. The failure to clear up the post-war situation did not merely leave problems unsolved; it created new ones which aggravated the difficulties still further. Before long, those in the world who wanted peace were in the position of men trying to

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter II, p. 46.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter II, p. 55.

build a wall against the sea, with ill-laid foundations, inadequate materials, and insufficient time.

This was the fate which the international labour organisations suffered in common with so many others. After the war they expected to be able to repair the damage brought about by the war, to remove one by one the causes of war, to consolidate stage by stage the organisation of peace, and in this atmosphere to advance step by step towards a new and better social order. But before the post-war situation had been straightened up they found themselves confronted, first with a world economic crisis and then with the menace of a new world war.

### *c. Approach of a New War*

In 1929 began the economic crisis and the great depression. Under the influence of this world-wide disaster the international labour movement could neither concentrate on liquidating the past nor plan with confidence for the future. The needs of the present were too insistent.

From 1933 onwards the problems of the economic crisis merged into those caused by the rise of dictatorship, and year by year the situation became increasingly dangerous as a result of the successive acts of aggression committed by Japan, Italy and Germany, and the approach of a new war.<sup>1</sup>

In this situation the international organisations of the labour movement found themselves being carried along more and more by events, with no opportunity for pursuing long-term policies and settling fundamental questions of principle. Almost the whole of their time and energy had to be devoted to problems of the moment.

The I.F.T.U. continued to hold its congresses at regular intervals, but the L.S.I. held no full congress after 1931, and no large-scale conferences at all after 1933. There were, however, numerous meetings of its Executive and Bureau,<sup>2</sup> and repeated joint meetings and conferences of the I.F.T.U. More often than not these gatherings were called to deal with an emergency situation created by some new act of aggression on the part of the dictators. Where the emphasis had previously been on disarmament it was now on collective resistance to aggression. It was with the urgent problem of one international crisis after

<sup>1</sup> Japan's aggression in Manchuria had already started in 1931.

<sup>2</sup> The Executive consisted of between 40 and 50 members from all the affiliated countries and the Bureau comprised about a dozen members of the Executive who could come together at short notice between Executive meetings. See also Chapter V, pp. 177, 183.

another that the international organisations of the labour movement were concerned in the last part of the period between the two wars. This was the case not only for the I.F.T.U. but for the International Trade Secretariats as well, not only for the L.S.I. but also for the other political or semi-political organisations which had grown up in association with it.

d. *Position in 1939*

Nevertheless, in spite of the increasingly complex and dangerous political and economic situations with which they had to deal, the international organisations remained in existence and continued their work. They were no longer the dream of a handful of idealists. They had passed out of the experimental stage and had gathered a wealth of experience of international discussion and action. Some of their leaders, such as Arthur Henderson, Vandervelde, de Brouckère, Huysmans, Otto Bauer, Friedrich Adler and Léon Blum on the political side, and Sir Walter Citrine, Mertens, Jouhaux and Fimmen on the trade union side, were not only men of standing in their own countries but international figures whose names were known all over the world. And while during the last war the organisations were destroyed, and most of the contacts broken, in this war they remain in being as a nucleus for the new Internationals which will emerge when the war is over.

A feature of the inter-war period was that in many countries the trade unions were increasingly recognised as part of the machinery of industry, and many Socialist parties for the first time gained experience of Government responsibility. In the industrial field the trade unions came to the fore in connection with the activities of the International Labour Organisation. The trade unions of individual countries were associated with this work through their representation at the International Labour Conferences and on the Governing Body. Moreover, international organisations such as the International Federation of Trade Unions, the Miners' International Federation, the International Federation of Textile Workers' Associations, and others, were able to take part in the work by co-ordinating the activities and policy of the unions at the International Labour Conferences, by supplying information to the I.L.O., by putting forward suggestions for action, and so on. On the political side there was no such link between the international Labour and Socialist organisations and the League of Nations. The only approach to the League was by way of a petition, a method that was adopted by the Labour and Socialist International, the International of

Socialist Youth and other bodies at the time of the Disarmament Conference.

But while the Labour and Socialist parties were not given the same measure of official recognition as the trade unions in the sphere of international government, they were acquiring a new status in many of the individual countries. Because of their continued growth, and of their increasing popular support, as revealed in the results of elections, a number of these parties were called upon to participate in coalition Governments, and sometimes to form Governments independently. This development called for a change of outlook and a new sense of responsibility. The old days of perpetual opposition had gone. Before 1914 there were few examples of Socialist participation in government; after 1918 there were many.

If the years after 1918 had been years of peace and prosperity, instead of being marred by the growth of a belief in dictatorship, force and repression, this development in status and responsibility would presumably have been carried over from the separate countries into the field of international government. After the present war the acceptance of the international organisations of the labour movement as partners in the work of establishing peace and security by international action would seem to be a logical next step in the evolution of international relations.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In addition to the books already mentioned see Arthur Shadwell: *The Socialist Movement, 1824-1924*, Philip Allan & Co., London, 1925, especially Part I, Chapter VI and Part II, Chapter II; L. L. Lorwin: *Labour and Internationalism*, Macmillan Co., New York, 1929; E. H. Carr: *Karl Marx*, J. M. Dent, 1934; Bjarne Braatoy: *Labour and War*, Allen & Unwin, 1934; Franz Borkenau: *Socialism—National or International*, Routledge, 1943; Adolf Stürnthal: *The Tragedy of European Labour 1918-1939*, Gollancz, 1944. See also the following: *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 14th Edition, articles on 'The International' and on 'Socialism'; *The Book of the Labour Party*, Caxton Publishing Company, 1925; *The Encyclopædia of the Labour Movement*, Caxton Publishing Company, 1928, Vol. II, article on 'Internationals'.

## CHAPTER II

### STRUCTURE OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR MOVEMENT

THE International Labour Movement includes several organisations in addition to those already mentioned. On the industrial side the field is held by the International Federation of Trade Unions and by some two dozen International Trade Secretariats. In the political sphere there is an International of Socialist Youth as well as the Labour and Socialist International. Alongside these are to be found several smaller bodies which have been set up to promote international collaboration in special spheres of activity. They include the Workers' Sport International, the Workers' Wireless International and the International Alliance of Socialist Lawyers. Certain other subjects, such as education and questions affecting women, are dealt with by special committees set up by the Internationals or by special conferences called by them for the purpose. These do not constitute separate international bodies but represent adaptations of the machinery of the Internationals to deal with specific issues.

#### POLITICAL BODIES

##### I. LABOUR AND SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL

The Labour and Socialist International is an organisation of Labour and Socialist parties. It includes Social-Democratic parties on the German and Scandinavian model, Socialist parties such as those in France and the Latin countries, and Labour parties with trade unions affiliated collectively, as in Great Britain and Belgium.

##### a. *Aims and Objects*

In order to be eligible for affiliation the parties must accept two principles: they must adopt Socialism as their aim and must recognise the class struggle as a means of achieving it. These are the only two points of doctrine laid down in the Constitution of the L.S.I. The English, French, and German texts of the Constitution do not agree on the actual formulation of this Article of the constitution, but the sense of it in all three languages is the same. The French and German texts

say that 'The L.S.I. is a union of Labour and Socialist Parties, which recognises the replacement of the capitalist system of production by a Socialist system as the object, and the class struggle expressed in political and economic action as the means, of emancipating the working class'.<sup>1</sup> In the English text these ideas are expressed as follows: 'The Labour and Socialist International is a Union of such parties as accept the principle of the economic emancipation of the workers from capitalist domination and the establishment of the Socialist Commonwealth as their object, and the class struggle which finds its expression in the independent political and industrial action of the workers' organisations as a means of realising that object.'<sup>2</sup>

The object of the L.S.I., as laid down by the Constitution, is 'to unify the activities of the affiliated parties, to arrange common action, and to bring about the entire unification of the International Labour and Socialist Movement on the basis of this Constitution'. Thus, as in the case of the earlier Internationals, common action is placed in the forefront. The question of unity is treated from two aspects. On the negative side the parties undertake not to affiliate to any other political international. Moreover, it is declared to be their duty to see 'that their members shall develop their activity in the international sphere first and foremost within the L.S.I., and shall be encouraged by their national organisations to refrain from individual membership of political organisations whose tendencies are at variance with the programme or tactics of the L.S.I.'.<sup>3</sup> The purpose of these provisions was to preserve the unity of the L.S.I. itself, which, it will be remembered, was formed by a union of parties belonging to two international organisations—the Second International and the Vienna Union. Positively the parties affiliated to the L.S.I. are enjoined to take active steps to promote unity both in the international sphere and in their respective countries. The final paragraph of the Constitution puts the matter in these words: 'The L.S.I. appeals to

<sup>1</sup> *Quatrième Congrès de l'Internationale Ouvrière Socialiste, Vienna 1931, Rapports et Comptes Rendus, Publié par le Secrétariat de l'Internationale Ouvrière Socialiste, Zurich, p. 902. Vierter Kongress der Sozialistischen Arbeiter-Internationale. Wien, 1931, Berichte und Verhandlungen, Verlag des Sekretariats der Sozialistischen Arbeiter-Internationale, Zürich, p. 880.*

<sup>2</sup> *Reports and Proceedings of the Fourth Congress of the L.S.I., Vienna, 1931. Published by the Secretariat of the L.S.I. and by the Labour Party, London, p. 904.*

<sup>3</sup> This clause was added by the Brussels Congress in 1928, after it had been found that individual members of affiliated parties had sometimes been associated with other international organisations which were openly or covertly opposing the L.S.I. *Report of the Third Congress of the L.S.I., Brussels, 1928, published by the Secretariat of the L.S.I., Zürich, and by the Labour Party, London, 1928, Section VII, p. 44.*



all workers to realise unity within the Socialist movement in each country and in the International. It is determined to work strenuously for the realisation of this unity on the basis of the decisions and resolutions passed by it. It appeals to the Socialists of all countries to give support to its efforts by making all endeavours to bring about a united front against capitalism and imperialism both in their own countries and in the international working class organisation.'

With a view to welding the affiliated parties into a union capable of taking really effective international action, the Constitution provides that the decisions of the L.S.I. in all international questions are binding on its affiliated bodies. The resolutions of the International therefore imply a self-imposed limitation on the autonomy of the affiliated organisations. It is clear that common action can only be fully developed if all the parties concerned participate. If decisions of the international organisation are ignored, or only partially applied, because of considerations of domestic policy in the separate countries, then its action is to that extent weakened. In practice, this has been one of the central problems of international co-operation in the Labour Movement. Sometimes it is possible to adopt an international decision without much difficulty, e.g. on a question of principle on which all are in agreement, but there are times when a proposal which would involve taking simultaneous action in the different parliaments, or carrying out campaigns in the press and on the platforms of the various countries, might prove extremely difficult to carry out. The question then arises whether it is best to adopt the proposal as a gesture, knowing that not all the organisations concerned will be able to apply it in full, or to modify it in such a way as to include only those parts which all could undertake to carry out, though some would be prepared to go much further. The provisions of Article 3 of the Constitution were designed to meet this point by subjecting the affiliated parties to a self-imposed limitation on their freedom of action, and engaging them to place international decisions first. It was a rule, however, that was not universally observed, and could not be strictly enforced.<sup>1</sup>

Again, with the object of making international action effective at all times, the Constitution declares that, as the L.S.I. is as essential during war as in peace, in conflicts between nations it shall be recognised by the affiliated parties as the highest authority. This was drafted in the light of the experience of the years of propaganda against war and militarism before 1914,

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter V, p. 192.

and with the difficulties of the war years fresh in memory. When the L.S.I. was founded, it was thought that the workers of the various countries should never again allow themselves to be divided by war. If their countries went to war, the workers' organisations should remain in contact. They should accept the guidance of the International, and not allow themselves to be swayed by considerations of national policy. At that time it was thought that the organisations in the different countries would remain bound together by their international ties, that the International would not be broken up, but would continue to live and to act in war as in peace. It was not foreseen that even before the new war broke out the organisations of some of the leading countries would themselves be destroyed, and that the International would be progressively weakened by successive international crises.

#### *b. Composition*

At its peak period the L.S.I. had affiliated parties in practically every country in Europe and in a number of countries overseas. Its best years belong to the decade from its foundation in 1923 to the advent of Hitler to power in Germany in 1933. During that time its total membership grew, and also the number of its affiliated parties. From 1933 onwards it lost several of its strongest parties as a result of their destruction by Nazi and Fascist Governments, and this loss was not made good by subsequent affiliations.

In the interests of unity the L.S.I.—like the Second International—was based on the principle that only one party could affiliate for each country or nation. Only in very special circumstances was this rule relaxed. Thus, where there had been in a country one party affiliated to the Second International, and another affiliated to the Vienna Union, the two parties were included in the L.S.I.—but always in the hope that they would sink their differences and unite. Examples of this were provided by the Labour Party and the I.L.P. in Great Britain and by the Polish Socialist Party (P.P.S.) and the Independent Socialist Party in Poland. On the other hand, when the Independent Socialist Party in Argentina applied for affiliation in 1928, after breaking away from the Argentine Socialist Party, the affiliation was rejected, though a representative of the Independent Socialist Party was allowed to attend the Brussels Congress as a fraternal delegate. The matter was again considered by the Executive Committee of the L.S.I. in 1929, with the result that an appeal was made to the Argentine Socialists to re-establish

their unity, the application for affiliation being meantime held over.<sup>1</sup>

But although the general principle was one party for each country there were countries in which several parties existed, not in competition or opposition to each other, but because they represented workers of different nationalities. Thus there was a Polish Socialist Party in Poland, and also parties representing the German workers, the Ukrainians and the Jewish workers. In Czechoslovakia there was a German Social-Democratic Labour Party, in addition to the Czechoslovakian Social-Democratic Labour Party: there was also a Polish Socialist Labour Party and a Ruthenian Social-Democratic Labour Party.<sup>2</sup> And there were other examples. These parties were the successors of organisations which had been in existence before 1914, and they continued their work in the new States set up after the war.

It was impossible, for many reasons, for parties with such different traditions, forms of organisation and national composition, to unite immediately into a single party for each new State. Nor was it desirable to take only one of them into the International from each country and leave the rest outside. Accordingly the Constitution of the L.S.I. contained detailed provisions for enabling them to affiliate, and for allocating their country's votes and representation between them.

### c. *Affiliated Parties*

The parties affiliated to the L.S.I. were of three main types—those composed entirely of individual members, those to which trade unions were allowed to affiliate collectively, and parties and groups which had been driven underground or into exile.

#### i. *Parties based on individual membership*

Outstanding examples of the first type were the Social-Democratic Party of Germany before its destruction by Hitler in 1933, and the Austrian Social-Democratic Labour Party before its suppression by Dollfuss in 1934. The German Party had over a million members and the Austrian nearly 700,000.<sup>3</sup> A long

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Third Congress of the L.S.I., Brussels, 1928*, Section VII, p. 60. And *Report of the Fourth Congress of the L.S.I., Vienna, 1931*, p. 114.

<sup>2</sup> The Ruthenian S.D.L.P. was dissolved in July 1930, and its members were transferred to the Czechoslovakian S.D.L.P. *Report of the Congress of the L.S.I., Vienna, 1931*, p. 241.

<sup>3</sup> In 1931, when the last membership figures of the L.S.I. were published.

way behind them came the Social-Democratic Labour Party in Sweden, which at that time contained close on 300,000 members, and the Social-Democratic Labour Party of Czechoslovakia which had over 150,000. The French Socialist Party, while it played such an important part in the International, had less than 150,000 members, though this figure was substantially increased a few years later, at the time of the Popular Front Government, headed by the Party's leader, Leon Blum. Other important Socialist and Social-Democratic parties based on individual membership were the Social-Democratic Parties of Holland, Denmark, and Switzerland, the Polish Socialist Party and the Spanish Socialist Labour Party.

The Norwegian Labour Party stood outside for many years. It was formed in 1927 by an amalgamation of the old Norwegian Labour Party and the Norwegian Social-Democratic Labour Party. In 1921 the old Norwegian Labour Party went over to the Communists, whereupon the minority, who objected to this decision, formed the Social-Democratic Labour Party, consisting of individual members. This Party affiliated to the L.S.I. By 1923 the Labour Party had split again. In that year the Party decided by a majority to break away from the Communist International, and a Communist Party was then formed by the new minority.<sup>1</sup> After a while negotiations were opened between the Labour Party and the Social-Democratic Labour Party with a view to unification, and in January 1927 a new Norwegian Labour Party was formed by the amalgamation of these two bodies. Unfortunately, it was only possible to achieve unity by severing Norway's contacts with the International. Whereas the Social-Democratic Labour Party had been affiliated to the L.S.I., the Labour Party had linked up with an organisation known as the Paris 'Bureau of Revolutionary Socialist Parties'. Both Parties had to decide to withdraw from their respective international organisations, as they could not agree that the new Party should affiliate to one to the exclusion of the other.<sup>2</sup> Not until 1938 was the new Party able to affiliate to the L.S.I. and thus to bring Norway into the International once again.

## ii. *Parties with members affiliated collectively*

The leading parties of the second type were the Labour Parties of Great Britain and Belgium. Until 1918 the British

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Second Congress of the Labour and Socialist International, Marseilles, 1925*. Published by the Labour Party, London, 1925, p. 173.

<sup>2</sup> *Third Congress of the L.S.I., Brussels, 1928*, Section IV, p. 108. *Fourth Congress, Vienna, 1931*, p. 383.

Labour Party consisted of affiliated bodies only. In 1900 a Labour Representation Committee had been formed by the trade unions with a view to securing independent working-class representatives in parliament. This became the Labour Party in 1906, after the return of a group of 29 Labour members in the general election of that year. Alongside the Labour Party there was also the Independent Labour Party founded in 1893. Before 1914 the Labour Party was predominantly a trade union party while the I.L.P. was an avowedly Socialist organisation composed of individual members only. After the war, when the Labour Party began to adopt a more definitely Socialist programme, it was decided to enrol individuals as members. From that time onwards the Party's membership figures included both the actual number of individual members and the number for whom collective affiliation fees were paid by trade unions and Socialist bodies such as the Fabian Society. The number of members, compiled on this basis, which was included in the membership of the L.S.I., was 2,501,000 in 1931, the last year for which the L.S.I. published figures.<sup>1</sup> The membership of the German party at the same period was 1,037,384<sup>2</sup> but while the German membership was composed entirely of individuals, the individual membership of the Labour Party did not touch 300,000 in any year down to 1931. The highest figure it has ever reached was 447,150 in 1937. The Belgian Labour Party likewise included affiliated organisations as well as individual members. Like the British Labour Party it accepted affiliations from trade unions and other workers' organisations, but it had closer links than the Labour Party with the Co-operative societies. It also counted amongst its affiliated bodies a number of the mutual insurance societies which were a characteristic feature of the Belgian Labour Movement. The membership of the Party in the L.S.I. in 1931 was 600,964. Other bodies of this type were the Hungarian Social-Democratic Party and the Workers' Association of Iceland.<sup>3</sup> There was also the tiny Labour Union in British Guiana, which was less a political party than a trade union.

### iii. *Emigré Organisations*

A few organisations of the third type, i.e. underground groups or parties in exile, were included in the L.S.I. from the begin-

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Fourth Congress of the L.S.I., Vienna, 1931*, p. 271.

<sup>2</sup> *Report of the Fourth Congress of the L.S.I., Vienna, 1931*, p. 266.

<sup>3</sup> The political and industrial activities of the organisation in Iceland have, however, since been divided and there is now a separate Social-Democratic Party.

ning. Unfortunately, their number grew as the years went by—a sign of the deteriorating international situation.

*Russia.* The first of these parties were those which were proscribed in Russia after the Revolution. By the time the L.S.I. was founded in 1923 these organisations had been driven underground in Russia and many of their leaders had formed groups or delegations to carry on their work from abroad. The parties thus affected by the split with the Communists were the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, the Russian Socialist Revolutionaries, the Georgian Social-Democratic Labour Party, the Ukrainian Social-Democratic Labour Party, and Dashnak-zutium (the Armenian Revolutionary Federation).

To be banned by the authorities was no new experience for these parties. They had already suffered persecution in the days of the Tsars. Their leading members had been imprisoned, banished to Siberia and driven into exile. They had gained experience of underground work through long years of struggle and repression. Perhaps the best known of these parties was the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, which had been formed in 1898. It was in this period that the famous division occurred between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks, and it was from the Bolsheviks that the Communist Party eventually sprang. At the time of the Revolution these parties came into their own and for a short time they played a leading part in the work of the Government. But one by one they were suppressed by the Bolsheviks and once again driven underground.

After its suppression the Social-Democratic Labour Party carried on its activities, partly by surreptitious means in the country itself and partly through a foreign delegation composed of the leaders who had escaped to other countries. But as time went on all effective contact between the foreign delegation and the members in Russia was broken off. Until Hitler's rise to power the headquarters of the foreign delegation were in Berlin. They were then transferred to Paris, where they remained until the present war.<sup>1</sup>

The Party of the Russian Socialist Revolutionaries was started in 1900. This, too, was a strong organisation. It at one time held a majority in the Soviets, and it polled twenty million votes in the elections for the Constituent Assembly. After their suppression by the Bolsheviks the Socialist Revolutionaries established a representation abroad. At first the headquarters were

<sup>1</sup> *Second Congress of the L.S.I., Marseilles, 1925, p. 184. Third Congress, Brussels, 1928, Section IV, p. 130. Fourth Congress, Vienna, 1931, p. 347.*

in Prague, but following a split in the foreign delegation a second office was opened in Paris.<sup>1</sup>

*Armenia.* Dashnakzutiun was founded in 1890 and thus had been in existence for nearly thirty years at the time of the Russian Revolution. It seems to have been, in fact, the oldest political party in Armenia. From 1918 to 1921 when Armenia was an independent republic, Dashnakzutiun was responsible for the country's government. With a majority of the votes, and with seventy-three seats out of eighty-two, Dashnakzutiun was by far the strongest party. Then came the occupation of Armenia. The Party was declared by the Bolsheviks to be illegal and its leaders either fled abroad or were imprisoned. Those who escaped re-established the Party's headquarters in Paris. The Party had members in a number of countries of Europe and also in the United States of America.<sup>2</sup>

*Georgia.* The Georgian Social-Democratic Labour Party dated from 1899. This, too, was a powerful party after the revolution. At the elections to the Constituent Assembly it secured 516,542 votes, or 81 per cent of the total. Like the other parties it was declared illegal, and was driven underground. For some years the Party was able to maintain contact with its members in Russia who seem to have been able to hold clandestine conferences from time to time. Its headquarters outside Georgia were in Paris, where the Foreign Bureau of the Party Executive established an office.<sup>3</sup>

*Ukraine.* The Ukrainian Social-Democratic Labour Party was founded in 1905 as the successor to the Ukrainian Revolutionary Party which was established in 1900. In 1917 the Party obtained 550,000 votes in the elections to the Constituent Assembly and in 1919 its membership was 35,000. Although this Party, too, was declared illegal in Russia, it continued to draw support amongst the Ukrainians in Czechoslovakia, Poland and Roumania. In Czechoslovakia the party was able to carry on its work in relative freedom, and it was in Prague that its headquarters were set up. On the other hand great difficulties were encountered in Armenia and Poland.<sup>4</sup> The punitive expeditions against the Ukrainians in Poland under the régime of Pilsudski gave proof of the repressive attitude of the Polish

<sup>1</sup> *Second Congress of the L.S.I., Marseilles, 1925, p. 186. Third Congress, Brussels, 1928, Section IV, p. 133. Fourth Congress, Vienna, 1931, p. 353.*

<sup>2</sup> *Second Congress of the L.S.I., Marseilles, 1925, p. 115. Third Congress, Brussels, 1928, Section IV, p. 8. Fourth Congress, Vienna, 1931, p. 207.*

<sup>3</sup> *Second Congress of the L.S.I., Marseilles, 1925, p. 149. Third Congress, Brussels, 1928, Section IV, p. 64. Fourth Congress, Vienna, 1931, p. 262.*

<sup>4</sup> *Second Congress of the L.S.I., Marseilles, 1925, p. 193. Third Congress, Brussels, 1928, Section IV, p. 145. Fourth Congress, Vienna, 1931, p. 369.*

authorities. In spite of the difficulties, however, a Ukrainian Socialist Radical Party, which had been founded in 1890, was able to function in Poland. The Party, which maintained friendly relations with the Ukrainian Social-Democratic Labour Party, became affiliated to the L.S.I. in February 1931.

The suppression of these parties in the Soviet Union was accompanied by the persecution of their active members and leaders, and this was resented by the Socialist Parties of other countries, not only on general humanitarian principles, but also because so many of the victims were personally known to them. Naturally the action taken to put down the parties in Russia created a serious obstacle to unity or even co-operation with the Communists.

*Hungary.* An emigré organisation that was founded at about the same time as the foreign delegations of the Russian parties was Világosság, the group of Hungarian Socialist emigrés. Világosság was started in 1920 by Hungarian Socialists who fled the country when the Hungarian revolution was suppressed. The Hungarian Social-Democratic Party continued to exist, though its work was carried on under great difficulties, but for many of its former members and leaders a return to the country was out of the question. The group had members in various European countries and also overseas. Its work was carried on from headquarters in Vienna, and its membership in the L.S.I. was 2,600.<sup>1</sup>

*Italy.* For a while these bodies were the only underground or 'illegal' parties in the L.S.I., but in 1926 another was added to their number. This was the Italian Socialist Party, the first victim of Fascism. Before its dissolution by Mussolini the Italian Socialist Party affiliated to the L.S.I. on 31,000 members. After the dissolution the Party continued to carry on in secret but, as in the case of the Russian parties, it was no longer possible to compute its membership. A large number of Italian workers and Socialists, however, escaped to other countries—or were already living abroad, especially in France, Switzerland, and the United States. With this nucleus it was decided to restart the Party on foreign soil. Not only so, but the Italians in exile were even able to heal a breach which had occurred in the Party in Italy and to unite the Socialist groups—the Unitary Socialist Party and the Maximalist Party—into one Italian Socialist Party.<sup>2</sup> This took place at a unification Conference in Paris in 1930. The new Party thus constituted was affiliated to

<sup>1</sup> *Second Congress of the L.S.I., Marseilles, 1925, p. 164. Third Congress, Brussels, 1928, Section IV, p. 89. Fourth Congress, Vienna, 1931, p. 294.*

<sup>2</sup> *Fourth Congress of the L.S.I., Vienna, 1931, p. 304.*



the L.S.I. on a basis of 2,800 members at the time of the last International Socialist Congress in 1931.<sup>1</sup> The suppression of the Socialist Party in Italy, the assassination of its leader, Matteotti, and the relentless persecution of its members by the supporters of the Fascist régime were never forgotten by the Socialists of the other countries. Socialist opposition to Fascism did not appear for the first time when Italy attacked Abyssinia, or when the war became imminent in 1939; it was given continuous expression throughout the years from 1926 onwards.

*Lithuania.* While the Fascist movement was growing up in Italy, conditions were becoming difficult for the Socialist Parties in the Baltic countries as well. In the new States which emerged from the war of 1914-1918 the Socialist movement was able for a time to make substantial progress, but before many years had passed the forces of reaction became more powerful and one by one the Socialist Parties in Lithuania, Estonia, and Latvia were overthrown.

Lithuania was the first of these countries to come under the domination of a dictatorship. At the time of the Marseilles Congress of the L.S.I. in 1925 the Lithuanian Socialist Party, which had been founded as long ago as 1896, had 2,000 members. In 1926 it polled 170,000 votes and obtained 15 of the 78 seats in the Diet. It thus became the second largest party in the State. After this election the Socialist Party was represented in the Government, but in December 1926 the Government was overthrown by an armed revolt, and the Diet was dissolved. The workers' organisations were suppressed and many of the Party's members and leaders had to escape to other countries. From that time onwards the Party was virtually an underground organisation.<sup>2</sup>

In the other two countries conditions remained more favourable for several years. It was after Hitler's accession to power in 1933 that they too became dominated by dictatorships.

*Estonia.* The Socialist Labour Party in Estonia was founded in 1925 by the amalgamation of two parties which had carried on the work of the pre-war Russian organisations. These were the Social-Democratic Party, formed in 1917 as an offshoot of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, and the Independent Socialist Party, a continuation of the Party of the Socialist Revolutionaries. The new Party had 4,200 members, and with 22 seats out of 100 in the Diet it was the second largest

<sup>1</sup> *Fourth Congress of the L.S.I., Vienna, 1931, p. 300.*

<sup>2</sup> *Second Congress of the L.S.I., Marseilles, 1925, p. 170. Third Congress, Brussels, 1928, Section IV, p. 102. Fourth Congress, Vienna, 1931, p. 311.*

party in the State. These seats had been won by the Social-Democratic Party and the Independent Socialist Party in the general election of 1923, when the Socialist vote was 86,000 or 18.7 per cent of the whole. After a Communist attempt at a *coup d'état* in December 1924 the Socialists had accepted office in a coalition Government, with the object of holding the reaction in check. They remained in the Government until June 1926. From November 1928 to May 1929 the Government was headed by a Socialist Prime Minister, and at the beginning of 1931 the Socialist Party entered into a coalition Government once again. By this time its parliamentary representation had risen to 25 and its vote had grown to over 120,000 out of 500,000.<sup>1</sup>

The Socialists remained in office until January 1932. In May of that year a general election produced a set-back for the Party, which lost three of its seats—a result of the growth of Fascist tendencies which had already been evident. Nevertheless two Socialists were included in the Government formed after the election. In 1933, however, the events in Germany produced more serious repercussions. A plebiscite taken in October of that year produced a vote in favour of a constitution with leanings towards Fascism. The new Government declared a state of emergency, which was subsequently prolonged. The elections were postponed and although the political parties were not formally dissolved they were prevented from carrying on their activities. In these circumstances the Social-Democratic Party had to be added to the growing list of organisations underground.<sup>2</sup>

*Latvia.* Here, the Social-Democratic Labour Party was founded in 1904. In the general election of 1922 it polled nearly 250,000 votes, 31.5 per cent of the total, and its representation in the Diet was 33 out of 100. From December 1926 to December 1927 four Social-Democratic members sat in the Government. When the Vienna Congress was held in 1931 the Party's membership had grown to 9,000, but in the general election of 1928 its vote had dropped to 231,000, or 24.9 per cent, and its representation in the Diet was down to 26.<sup>3</sup> In a general election shortly after the Vienna Congress, the Party lost a further 39,000 votes and four seats.

The intervening years had witnessed the growth of reactionary tendencies in Latvia, but it was not till after Hitler's rise to

<sup>1</sup> *Second Congress of the L.S.I., Marseilles, 1925*, p. 142. *Third Congress, Brussels, 1928*, Section IV, p. 52. *Fourth Congress, Vienna, 1931*, p. 249.

<sup>2</sup> *International Information*, published by the Secretariat of the L.S.I., Zürich. Issues for 1932-1939.

<sup>3</sup> *Second Congress of the L.S.I., Marseilles, 1925*, p. 168. *Third Congress, Brussels, 1928*, Section IV, p. 99. *Fourth Congress, Vienna, 1931*, p. 307.

power in Germany that an open dictatorship was established. Early in 1933 the Latvian Social-Democratic Party was charged with the formation of a new Government, but was unable to secure the agreement of the other parties on a programme. The Fascist movement continued to grow and in May 1934 the Farmers' Party Government which was then in power brought off a *coup d'état*. Martial law was proclaimed, the premises of the Social-Democratic Party were occupied, Socialist leaders were arrested or thrown into exile, and all the political parties were suppressed. From that time onwards Socialist activities had to be carried on underground. The Secretary of the Social-Democratic Party was kept in prison for over two years. Other members and leaders also found their way into prisons and concentration camps, or were driven abroad. The Socialists attempted to revive some of their activities by forming a Latvian Workers' and Peasants' Association, but no open party work was permitted.<sup>1</sup>

*Yugoslavia.* Serious obstacles were encountered by the Socialist Parties in the Balkan countries as well. In one of them—Yugoslavia—the Socialist Party was definitely suppressed. The Socialist Party of Yugoslavia was founded in 1921 by an amalgamation of three Socialist Parties which were already in existence in the territories taken into the new State. The membership of the Party was between 4,000 and 5,000 and it had one member in the Yugoslavian Parliament. The Party was suppressed in 1929, in common with the other political parties, when the King became to all intents and purposes a dictator. The Party's activity continued below the surface, but all attempts to reconstitute it on a legal basis—even under another name and with a more limited scope—were opposed by the authorities.<sup>2</sup>

*Germany.* The suppression of all these parties not only weakened the Socialist forces in the countries concerned but also reduced the strength of the International. Still more serious was the destruction of the Social-Democratic Parties in Germany and Austria. These were the two strongest parties based on individual membership and many other parties were inspired by their policy and activities. It may be questioned whether the great influence exercised upon the International by the group of parties from the countries of Central Europe was not too pronounced, and whether it might not have been better if there had been a more even balance between these parties

<sup>1</sup> *International Information*. Issues for 1932-1939.

<sup>2</sup> *Second Congress of the L.S.I., Marseilles, 1925*, p. 195. *Third Congress, Brussels, 1928*, Section IV, p. 152. *Fourth Congress, Vienna, 1931*, p. 378.

and those from the French and English-speaking countries. Be that as it may, the crushing of the German and Austrian parties was bound to have a considerable effect upon the cohesion, authority and financial strength of the L.S.I.

The story of the events in Germany and Austria is so well known that it is only necessary to recall the main phases. As already stated, the membership of the German Social-Democratic Party at the time of the Vienna Congress was 1,037,384. The Party was represented by 143 members out of 577 in the Reichstag, and in the general election of September 1930 it had polled 8,575,240 votes. It was, in fact, the largest party in the State. A further indication of its strength and influence was that it controlled no fewer than 196 daily newspapers. It was in February, 1933, after the fire at the Reichstag, that the final phase of Nazi terrorism was introduced, and it was at the beginning of March that the Nazis gained their triumph at the general elections.

In the face of the growing terrorism, and of the obvious intention of the Nazis to establish a dictatorship, the Social-Democratic Party Executive in Berlin attempted to pursue a policy which would give no pretext for repressive action against the Party. Their hope was that the Party's organisation might be maintained intact, until the Nazi Government could be overthrown. With this in mind a special National Conference of the Party held on April 26th, 1933, made changes in the Party's organisation in order to adapt it to the new situation. But when the trade unions were taken over by the Nazis on May 2nd, the Party Executive was transferred to Prague. Nevertheless some illusions still persisted. A section of the Party's Parliamentary Group still stayed on and attended the session of the Reichstag on May 17th. This, however, was the last occasion on which any activity in the name of the Party was tolerated.<sup>1</sup>

*Austria.* With Hitler installed in power in Germany the extension of Nazi rule in Austria was only a matter of time. But even before the Nazis succeeded in gaining control over Austria the Social-Democratic Movement had been suppressed under the régime of Chancellor Dollfuss, with the help of the Fascist forces headed by Major Fey and Prince Starhemberg. 'Austro-Marxism' fell a victim to 'Austro-Fascism'.

Encouraged by Hitler's success in Germany, the Fascist Movement in Austria grew rapidly during 1933. The Heimwehr demanded that Austria should become a totalitarian State. They called for the suppression of the Social-Democratic Party,

<sup>1</sup> *International Information*, 1933, p. 396.

the assimilation of the free trade unions by the State and the appointment of a Government Commissioner for Vienna in place of the elected Burgomaster, Karl Seitz, who was a Socialist. To meet this challenge the Social-Democratic Party Executive and the Executive of the Free Trade Union Federation declared that if any of these things should happen a general strike would be called.

It was just a year after Hitler's accession to power in Germany that the crash came. Early in February 1934 the Austrian Heimwehr occupied the town of Innsbruck. On February 12th the Federal Police raided the Labour headquarters in Linz. The Socialist Schutzbund put up a defence, and as soon as the news was known in Vienna a strike broke out. Subsequently there was fighting in Vienna and in other parts of the country as well.

After several days of bitter struggles the Socialists and trade unionists were defeated by the Fascist formations and the army. The Socialist leader, Otto Bauer, and the leader of the Schutzbund, Julius Deutsch, fled to Czechoslovakia. Karl Seitz was arrested in his office. The headquarters of the Social-Democratic Party and the trade unions were occupied by the Government and from that time onwards the Social-Democratic Party ceased to be a legal organisation. Yet as recently as November 1930 it had polled 1,517,251 votes and increased its representation from 71 to 72 in a National Assembly of 165. The Socialists in Austria replaced the Social-Democratic Party by a new underground organisation called the Revolutionary Socialists, which maintained contact with a foreign delegation under the leadership of Otto Bauer. For some time the headquarters of the foreign delegation which was known as the Auslandsbureau der Oesterreichischen Sozialisten (Alös) were in Brno, but with the increasing Nazi encroachments upon Czechoslovakia the headquarters were transferred to Paris.<sup>1</sup>

*Dansig.* Another party which was brought down in consequence of the events in Germany was the Social-Democratic Party in Danzig. This was a separate party founded in 1919, though its organisation and principles were inspired by those of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany. Because of Danzig's

<sup>1</sup> Otto Bauer: *Austrian Democracy under Fire*. Published by the Labour Party, London, 1934.

*Black Book of the Austrian Dictatorship*. Preface by Emile Vandervelde. Published by the Commission of Enquiry into the Conditions of Political Prisoners, l'Eglantine, Brussels, 1934.

*The Austrian Dictatorship at Work*. Preface by Sir Walter Citrine. Published by the Labour Party, London, 1935.

*International Information*. Issues for 1934.

position as a Free City under the protection of the League of Nations, the Social-Democratic Party and the trade unions in its territory were able to carry on as an outpost of open opposition to the Nazis long after the kindred organisations had been suppressed in Germany itself. The Nazis practised organised terrorism against the Socialists and trade unionists, yet as late as April 1935 the Social-Democratic Party was still the strongest opposition party in Danzig. The Social-Democrats actually gained a few votes in a general election held that month, when the Nazis failed to secure the two-thirds majority in the Diet which they needed in order to amend the Constitution. In defiance of the League of Nations the Nazi Government continued its campaign of terrorism and finally succeeded in suppressing the Social-Democratic Party in 1936. The Party's President and most of its other leaders and officials were placed under arrest.<sup>1</sup>

*Spain.* Meanwhile a storm was blowing up for the Socialist Labour Party in Spain. At the fall of the Spanish Monarchy in 1931, three Socialists entered the new Republican Government, and Julian Besteiro, the Socialist Labour Party Chairman, became President of the Cortes. After the resignation of Premier Azaña in 1933 the Socialist Party ceased to be represented in the Government. But although the Socialists and Left Republicans suffered a defeat in the general election of November 1933, the Socialist Party remained the strongest single party in the country. From this time onwards politics in Spain moved steadily to the Right. In the general atmosphere prevailing in Europe the forces of Fascism in Spain grew stronger and the Socialist and trade union organisations suffered from the repressive activities of Governments of the Right, inspired by the Fascist leader Gil Robles. Things came to a head in 1936. In February and March of that year the Left bloc, including the Socialists, gained a substantial victory, for they secured 262 seats (80 Socialists) as against 142 obtained by the parties of the Right. A new Left Government was formed by Azaña with the support of the workers' organisations, but without any Socialist ministers. In May Azaña became President of the Republic and in July General Franco started his military revolt, which resulted in a Civil War that lasted for nearly three years. During the Civil War the Socialists again participated in various Governments. By March 1939 the resistance of the Government forces was worn down. The victory of Franco and his

<sup>1</sup> *International Information. Issues for 1931-1936. Second Congress of the I.S.I., Marseilles, 1925, p. 139. Third Congress, Brussels, 1928, Section IV, p. 47. Fourth Congress, Vienna, 1931, p. 242.*

Fascist supporters was followed by the destruction of the Socialist and trade union organisations. Thousands of members and leaders were thrown into the prisons and concentration camps and thousands more escaped to other countries.<sup>1</sup>

*Portugal.* Conditions were always difficult for the Socialist Party in Portugal. This Party, which was founded in 1875, became affiliated to the L.S.I. before the Second Congress in Marseilles in 1925, but was never able to make any real contribution to the work of the International. It originally affiliated on 2,500 members, but whether its membership grew or fell was unknown to the International, which continued to publish the same figure in its later reports. The Party had had no representation in the Portuguese Parliament and was unable to carry on any regular political activity because of the dictatorship. In 1933 a new constitution on corporate lines was adopted for Portugal, and a Statute of National Labour laid down the basis for a corporate organisation of labour. At the end of 1934 a general election was held. The Socialist Party, like other opposition parties, boycotted the election because they felt it would have been impossible to carry on an effective election campaign in view of the repressive activities of the Government. There was accordingly only one list of candidates. As in Italy and Austria, a corporate Chamber was established. The place of the independent political parties was taken by a National Union.<sup>2</sup>

*Czechoslovakia.* The last of the parties to be destroyed or driven underground were the Social-Democratic Parties in Czechoslovakia. The Czechoslovakian Social-Democratic Labour Party was founded in 1872 and at the time of the Vienna Congress in 1931 it held 39 seats out of 300 in the Lower House. The German Social-Democratic Labour Party in Czechoslovakia was founded in 1919, and in 1931 it held 21 of the 300 seats.

In May 1935, two years after Hitler's accession to power in Germany, and one year after the destruction of the labour movement in Austria, a general election took place in Czechoslovakia. The Czechoslovakian Social-Democratic Party was able to maintain its position. On the other hand, the German Social-Democratic Labour Party lost a considerable amount of ground to the Sudeten German Fascists. The remaining German parties lost even more. After the election both the Czech and the German

<sup>1</sup> *International Information. Issues for 1931-1939. Second Congress of the L.S.I., Marseilles, 1925, p. 188. Third Congress, Brussels, 1928, Section IV, p. 135. Fourth Congress, Vienna, 1931, p. 356.*

<sup>2</sup> *International Information. Issues for 1931-1939. Second Congress of the L.S.I., Marseilles, 1925, p. 181. Third Congress, Brussels, 1928, Section IV, p. 125. Fourth Congress, Vienna, 1931, p. 340.*

Social-Democratic Parties continued to be represented in the Government as before.<sup>1</sup>

The next four years brought increasing economic and political dangers for Czechoslovakia, and the Social-Democrats concentrated their efforts on saving the Republic and its democratic structure. In October 1938, shortly after the Munich agreements, the Czechoslovakian Social-Democratic Labour Party withdrew from the L.S.I. In December a Party Congress decided to wind up the Party, and steps were taken to form a new and more modest body, the National Party of Working People. But this sacrifice was in vain. Hitler marched into Prague in March 1939, and from then onwards the Labour and Socialist movement in Czechoslovakia was deprived of its possibilities of action. An immediate result of Munich was that many German Social Democrats and trade unionists were trapped in the Sudeten areas ceded to Germany. Some of them succeeded in escaping to other countries. All that remained of the German Social-Democratic Labour Party in Czechoslovakia were small groups in Prague and various other towns. A meeting in December 1938 decided that the Party should be dissolved. In February 1939 a meeting of the majority of the Party Executive decided that all former members of the Party with whom contact could be established should be organised into a Trustee Association of Sudeten Social-Democrats, which would retain the old Party's affiliation to the L.S.I. This new body, however, was driven into exile when Hitler entered Prague in the following month.<sup>2</sup>

#### d. *Effect of Persecution*

Clearly these struggles against Governments and dictatorships, these losses over an extended period, affected the policy and activities of the L.S.I., and coloured the attitude of the affiliated parties. The trade unions, socialist youth organisations, cultural societies and all the other organisations of the Labour movement, suffered the same fate as the Labour and Socialist Parties. It was, in new forms, the old struggle of the workers' organisations against the State and society. While some parties were actually participating in Governments, others were being suppressed and their members and leaders persecuted. Parties which had themselves helped to govern their

<sup>1</sup> *International Information*. Issues for 1931-1939. *Second Congress of the L.S.I., Marseilles, 1925*, p. 135. *Third Congress, Brussels, 1928*, Section IV, p. 45. *Fourth Congress, Vienna, 1931*, p. 231.

<sup>2</sup> *International Information*, 1939, pp. 62, 297.



countries, and which had made their contributions to the progress and welfare of those countries, were proscribed, outlawed, declared to be dangerous to the State. The meetings of the L.S.I. were attended both by representatives of the 'living' parties, which carried on their work openly and legally, in co-operation with other elements in their respective countries, and by those from parties which were condemned to secret and dangerous activities in an attempt to overthrow the régimes of dictatorship. The needs of the two types of organisation were so different that there was no real basis for a concerted and united international programme of work. The narrowing down of the possibilities for effective constructive action in one country after another seriously restricted the opportunities for international action. Not only did the L.S.I. lose in numbers and financial strength, but it lost in cohesion.

### c. *Membership Figures*

At its best the L.S.I. represented something over six-and-a-half million members. This was during the period down to 1928. By 1931, when the last figures were published, the number had sunk to under six-and-a-quarter million, in spite of the fact that the membership of the parties in the democratic countries had, in general, tended to grow. In round figures the membership was 6,250,000 at the time of the Second Congress in 1925, 6,600,000 when the Third Congress was held in 1928 and 6,200,000 at the time of the Fourth Congress in 1931.<sup>1</sup> Thus the total membership remained fairly stable. The increase between 1925 and 1928 was due more to a growth of the membership of existing parties than to new affiliations. Several parties increased their membership between 1928 and 1931 also, but to set against this there was a heavy slump in the figures for the British Labour Party, as a result of the Trade Disputes and Trade Unions Act of 1927.

By 1925, two years after its foundation, most of the parties had already affiliated. After that only two parties of any size were added—the Swiss Socialist Party, which affiliated on 36,000 members before the Congress of 1928, and the General Jewish Labour Union (the 'Bund') in Poland, which came in with 15,000 members before the Congress of 1931.<sup>2</sup> A few Parties dropped out in addition to those which were suppressed

<sup>1</sup> *Second Congress of the L.S.I., Marseilles, 1925*, Tables facing p. 196. *Third Congress, Brussels, 1928*, Section IV, p. 156. *Fourth Congress, Vienna, 1931*, p. 380.

<sup>2</sup> Other Parties which affiliated after 1925 were the Workers' Association of Iceland and the Ukrainian Socialist-Radical Party in Poland.

in their respective countries. Of these the most important was the Norwegian Labour Party, which withdrew from the L.S.I. before 1928, for reasons already given, but returned again in 1938.<sup>1</sup>

At the time of its last Congress in 1931, the L.S.I. had affiliated organisations representing practically every country in Europe, the only important exceptions being Norway and Ireland. Its only overseas affiliations were parties in the United States, Argentina, Palestine and China. Uruguay had decided to affiliate in December 1930. There was no real contact with China, but relations were maintained with members of the Chinese Social-Democratic Party in Europe. The membership of these Parties was: Socialist Party of the United States, 12,000; Argentine Socialist Party, 12,000; Palestine Labour Party, 6,000; Chinese Social-Democratic Party, 16,000; a total of 46,000.<sup>2</sup> The L.S.I., therefore, was essentially a European organisation, and its centre of gravity was in central Europe.

The loss of strength from 1933 to 1939 must have been considerable. No membership figures for the L.S.I. as a whole were published after 1931, though from time to time the figures for individual parties were given in *International Information*. Some parties, such as those in Great Britain, France, Scandinavia and other democratic countries, registered increases in membership during this period, but these gains could not have outweighed the very serious losses suffered as a result of the destruction of the parties in Germany, Austria, and other countries dominated by dictatorships.

#### f. *The L.S.I. at the Outbreak of War, 1939*

For some time before the war discussions were proceeding in the L.S.I. on the policy which should be pursued internationally in the face of the growing threat of war. It was not easy to reach agreement as to what was desirable or possible in the increasingly complicated international circumstances of the time. As already pointed out,<sup>3</sup> the needs and desires of parties

<sup>1</sup> Down to 1928 the Independent Socialist Party of Turkey was included amongst the affiliated Parties, but contact with this Party was lost (*Fourth Congress of the L.S.I., Vienna, 1931*, p. 404). In 1930 the Ruthenian Social-Democratic Labour Party was dissolved and its members were transferred to the Czechoslovakian Social-Democratic Labour Party. The I.L.P. in Great Britain ceased to be affiliated to the L.S.I. when relations were broken off between the I.L.P. and the Labour Party.

<sup>2</sup> *Report of the Second Congress of the L.S.I., Marseilles, 1925*, Tables facing p. 196. *Third Congress, Brussels, 1928*, Section IV, p. 156. *Fourth Congress, Vienna, 1931*, p. 380.

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 43.

represented in Governments were not identical with those of parties in exile. Moreover, the views of parties directly menaced by the expanding military power of the Axis diverged from those of parties which saw their countries as potential neutrals in an armed conflict. Because of these differences it became more and more difficult for the L.S.I. to reach united decisions. In these conditions the L.S.I. was faced with the necessity for overhauling its internal organisation. To facilitate this the General Secretary, Dr. Friedrich Adler, placed his resignation in the hands of the Executive. The future of the Secretaryship was discussed at meetings of the L.S.I. in May and June 1939, and was still under discussion when the war broke out.<sup>1</sup> Two or three meetings were held in the early months of the war, including one meeting of the Executive in February 1940, but all the activities of the L.S.I. were interrupted by the invasion of France and the Low Countries.<sup>2</sup> Dr. Adler eventually made his way from his headquarters in Brussels to the United States, while the President, Camille Huysmans, journeyed to London after attending the meeting of the Belgian members of Parliament at Limoges, at which it was decided that Belgium should continue the war although her army had capitulated. On his way through France he set up centres for the relief of refugees. The members of the Executive of the L.S.I. were either trapped on the Continent or scattered in England or the United States. In these circumstances an immediate resumption of the work of the L.S.I. was impossible. A start was made in England, however, by the Labour Party, which took the initiative in calling monthly meetings of Socialists from the allied countries. Later parallel meetings on a broader basis were started under the presidency of Huysmans himself.

## 2. THE INTERNATIONAL OF SOCIALIST YOUTH

Closely allied with the L.S.I. is the International of Socialist Youth. This is an international organisation of youth organisations and federations in various countries, consisting of young people who are attracted to Socialism but who are not qualified by age for membership of the Labour and Socialist Parties themselves. The youth organisations were influenced by the same political and economic factors as the parent parties, and the fortunes of the Socialist Youth International went up and down in sympathy with those of the L.S.I.

<sup>1</sup> *International Information*, 1939, pp. 257, 307.

<sup>2</sup> *International Information*, 1940, Special Edition No. 1.

### *a. Foundation*

The Socialist Youth International was founded in Hamburg in 1923 immediately after the L.S.I. had been established. There had been youth organisations in the various countries, and attempts to promote international co-operation among them, before 1914. At the end of the last century there were organisations for improving the working conditions and educational opportunities of young workers in Germany and Austria-Hungary. An anti-militarist body of 'Socialist Young Guards' was started in Belgium, and organisations of young Socialists, mainly for educational purposes, grew up in Scandinavia.

It was in Stuttgart, in 1907 (the year and place of a famous International Socialist Congress) that the first Socialist Youth Congress was held. There it was agreed that the purposes of the Socialist Youth Movement were, in general, to promote social legislation and vocational opportunities for young workers, to educate young people for Socialism, and to carry on a struggle against militarism and war. An International Working Committee of Socialist Youth Organisations was set up, but the movement was not yet ripe for the establishment of a settled international organisation. Some progress was made down to 1914, but in most countries the Socialist Youth Movement was frowned upon by the authorities, because it was regarded as anti-militarist and revolutionary.

After the war of 1914-1918, which made all work in the international sphere impossible, the activities of the youth organisations in the Socialist movement were resumed. Some of the strongest organisations were established in countries of central and eastern Europe, such as Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland. A fresh start was made in Scandinavia, where the Socialist Youth Federations soon became strong and influential. Growth was rapid in Belgium and Holland. In France and Great Britain progress was slower. The Russian organisations fell under the ban of the Bolsheviks from the beginning, while the young Socialists of Italy were early victims of Fascism.

Before the foundation of the Socialist Youth International in 1923 there were two international organisations of young Socialists. Most of the Socialist Youth Federations, however, decided to link up with the new Socialist Youth International, and before long the remaining bodies, including the Swiss and the Norwegians, came in as well. The Socialist Student International also joined forces with the Socialist Youth International by affiliating collectively.

### *b. Composition*

Membership of the Socialist Youth International is open to all Socialist Youth Organisations accepting the principles of the Labour and Socialist Movement represented in the international sphere by the L.S.I. and the I.F.T.U. No provision is made for young socialists to join the International as individuals; membership is confined to youth federations which affiliate collectively. As in the case of the L.S.I., only one organisation can be accepted into affiliation, as a general rule, from each country. In countries whose population includes people of more than one nationality, and in which there are separate organisations for each nation in the Labour Movement, the youth organisations for the different nations may affiliate separately. In all cases a second youth federation in a country can only be accepted into the Socialist Youth International with the consent of the organisation which is affiliated already. Again, as in the case of the L.S.I., the affiliated organisations may not belong to any other international body in the same field.

### *c. Sphere of activity*

The practice of the Socialist Youth International regarding the force to be given to international decisions is governed by the considerations which apply in the international labour movement generally. The Socialist Youth International is a free association of autonomous organisations from the different countries. Their autonomy is limited only by the collective decisions of the International which they themselves take. The leaders of the International are, therefore, unable to give any binding instructions to the affiliated federations. The organisations in the different countries are expected to abide by the decisions of the committees and conferences of the International, but in practice all the important decisions on political activities and questions of organisations have been unanimous. Accordingly no affiliated organisation has been obliged by a majority vote to carry out an international decision against its better judgment.

In the main, Socialist Youth organisations are bodies for spreading Socialist teachings amongst young people and preparing them for membership of the adult Labour and Socialist Parties. In co-ordinating their work internationally, the Socialist Youth International endeavours to keep in step with the L.S.I. Its policy decisions are inspired by those of the L.S.I. and it has supported the L.S.I. in its activities wherever possible. The

central aim of the Socialist Youth International is, of course, the advancement of Socialism. But since young people form the bulk of the armed forces of the world the Socialist Youth International has also been particularly concerned with the struggle to prevent war. Like the other organisations of the Labour Movement the Socialist Youth Federations have been a special target for the dictators. The work of the Socialist Youth International for Socialism and peace has therefore been influenced more and more by the urgent needs of the movement of resistance to Fascism.

#### d. *Affiliated Organisations*

Practically all the organisations affiliated to the Socialist Youth International are in Europe. The Young Socialists of America were affiliated on a membership of 1,500 before the war.<sup>1</sup> The youth organisation of the Argentine Socialist Party was also linked up with the Socialist Youth International, but contact with that organisation was lost some years ago. These were the only extra-European contacts, except in so far as there may have been overseas membership in two bodies which were affiliated collectively—the Paole Zion Jewish Socialist Youth Organisations and the Socialist Students' International.

The strongest of the affiliated bodies is the Social-Democratic Youth Federation in Sweden, which had 110,000 members according to the last figures reported to the Socialist Youth International. Norway was affiliated on 30,000 members, Denmark on 20,000 and Finland on 3,000. The German organisation had 56,000 members before it became illegal in 1933 and the Austrians had 30,000 till 1934. There was also a small body with 500 members in Danzig until 1936. In Czechoslovakia there were three organisations: the Czechs and the Germans each had a membership of 6,000 and there were a further 3,000 in the Polish federation. The Czechs left the Socialist Youth International in 1938, while the German and Polish organisations went out of existence. Other important organisations were in Poland where there were 10,000 young Socialists in the Jewish 'Bund' and 500 young German Socialists; Belgium, where the Socialist Young Guards accounted for 8,000 members; Holland, where the Labour Youth Centre likewise had 8,000; and France, where the Youth organisation of the French Socialist Party had a membership of 20,000.

The Labour Party League of Youth in Great Britain affiliated on a membership of 3,000. Two youth organisations in Hungary

<sup>1</sup> Figures supplied by the Secretariat of the Socialist Youth International.

accounted for 3,000 and 300 members respectively. Luxemburg and Switzerland had 300 members each, but the Swiss withdrew from the Socialist Youth International in the autumn of 1939. The International also had contact with young Social-Democrats from Russia and Georgia, but the organisations inside those countries were illegal from 1920 onwards.

Like the L.S.I. the Socialist Youth International lost a number of its affiliated organisations as a result of the growth of Fascism. Early victims of Fascism, as already stated, were the young Socialists of Italy. The organisations in Lithuania and Yugoslavia were driven underground in 1928. In Estonia and Latvia the Socialist youth federations were suppressed in 1934, during the period of repression which followed Hitler's rise to power in Germany. In the same year the organisation in Bulgaria became illegal, though the Social-Democratic Party itself continued to remain in being. The organisation in Greece was suppressed in 1936 and that in Roumania in 1938. All these had been relatively small bodies. The largest of them seems to have been the Socialist Youth Federation in Bulgaria, which had 1,500 members.

There was also a Socialist Youth Federation in Spain. During the Civil War this organisation was thrown into close association with the young Communists in the struggle against the forces of General Franco, and in the end the young Socialists and Communists formed a united Socialist youth organisation. The united organisation became affiliated to the Socialist Youth International in April 1937. Subsequently the leadership of the organisation fell completely into the hands of the Communists. This development was incompatible with membership of the Socialist Youth International. In August 1939 the Spanish section was, therefore, expelled by the Congress of the International at Lille. This was the first occasion on which an expulsion had taken place, and the fact that the Socialist Youth International was prepared to go to such lengths, in spite of its sympathy with the Spanish workers, was an indication of the depth of feeling against Communism in the ranks of the young Socialists.

#### *e. Position at the Outbreak of War, 1939*

After the outbreak of war the Socialist Youth International came to a standstill. Already a number of its most active organisations had been suppressed in the countries ruled by dictatorships. In 1939 the affiliated bodies in Poland were lost as a result of the German invasion, and in 1940 the sections in

France, Belgium, Holland, Luxemburg, Denmark and Norway were destroyed as well. The only really big organisation left was the Swedish federation, which was geographically isolated. The Labour Party League of Youth was not a particularly strong body and its activities were very much reduced by the calls of national service. The President of the Socialist Youth International, Torsten Nilsson, was in Sweden; its secretary, Erich Ollenhauer, was in Paris till the collapse of France, but he eventually came to England; and the members of the Bureau were scattered. In the circumstances any effective action by the Socialist Youth International was impossible.

## INDUSTRIAL ORGANISATIONS

### I. THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS

The International Federation of Trade Unions is a body consisting of the National Trade Union Centres of the various countries, which adopt its policy and objects by their rules.<sup>1</sup> The trade union centres, as already explained, are the central organisations representing the trade unions as a whole in their respective countries, i.e. organisations corresponding to the Trades Union Congress in Great Britain. Single trade unions may not affiliate to the I.F.T.U., nor may trade unionists join as individuals.

#### a. *Aims and objects*

In the interests of unity the rules provide that only one national centre may affiliate from each country. The effect of the provision is that where more than one national organisation exists in a country the I.F.T.U. must decide which is the most eligible for affiliation, or must refuse to accept any affiliation from that country until the unions can agree to form a really representative centre. In the case of the United States, for example, it secured the affiliation of the A.F. of L. rather than await the formation of an all-inclusive centre representing both that body and the C.I.O. On the other hand, when the trade union movement was growing up in India it waited until the National Trade Union Federation was formed before accepting any Indian affiliation. Again, its attitude towards the trade union movement in some of the Latin American countries has been to keep the question of affiliation open until it is satisfied that a truly representative centre exists.

<sup>1</sup> *Statutes of the International Federation of Trade Unions*. Paris, 1935.



No mention is made in the rules of the position in countries in which there are separate trade unions for workers of different nationalities. In practice, however, the I.F.T.U. did not accept affiliations from organisations representing the separate nationalities, but adhered to the rule that only one national centre could affiliate from each country. In Czechoslovakia, for example, the German trade unions were affiliated to the I.F.T.U. through the Czechoslovakian organisation, which was recognised as the national centre for the trade union movement of the country as a whole.

National centres affiliating to the I.F.T.U. are not required by rule to submit to the decisions of the International. No provision is made for a self-imposed limitation on their freedom of action. On the contrary, it is specifically declared that the autonomy of the trade union movement in each country is 'guaranteed'.

The policy of the I.F.T.U. is determined by the International Trade Union Congress, which meets, as a rule, once in every three years. Its long-term objects are defined by the rules. The first of them is to bring about the unity of the working class by developing closer relations between the trade unions of all countries. Another is to develop International Trade Secretariats. The promotion of common trade union interests and activities is naturally provided for, and special reference is made to the promotion of international social legislation and of workers' education. The other main object of the I.F.T.U. is to 'avert war and combat reaction'.

#### b. *Membership Figures*

Judged by its membership figures the I.F.T.U. was a more powerful body than the L.S.I. The membership of the national centres affiliated to the I.F.T.U. was over 23,000,000 by the end of 1921, while the membership of the parties affiliated to the L.S.I. never reached 7,000,000. It is, however, impossible to assess their relative strength and influence on this basis alone, as they worked under different conditions and in different fields. The latest year for which a comparison can be made is 1931, when the last Congress of the L.S.I. was held, though later figures are available for the I.F.T.U. This was also the year in which the I.F.T.U. touched its highest figure before the rise of Hitler to power in Germany.

In 1931 the total membership of the national centres affiliated to the I.F.T.U. was 13,700,000,<sup>1</sup> while that of the parties belong-

<sup>1</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1930-32*. I.F.T.U., Paris, 1934, pp. 13, 35.

ing to the L.S.I. was 6,200,000.<sup>1</sup> Like the L.S.I., the I.F.T.U. lost heavily in membership as a result of the growth of Nazism and Fascism in Germany and Austria, and by 1934 its total had dropped to 8 millions.<sup>2</sup> But unlike the L.S.I., whose figures must have continued to fall, the I.F.T.U. was able to make good its losses, and even to increase its aggregate membership by several millions. By 1937, when it had lost members not only in Germany and Austria, but also in Danzig and the Saar, Latvia and Lithuania, Bulgaria and Greece, its membership had risen to 19,500,000, as the result of substantial increases in France and Spain and new affiliations from Norway, the United States of America and Mexico, India and the Netherlands East Indies.<sup>3</sup> Later it was to lose members in both Spain and Czechoslovakia, but even with these further set-backs its position at the outbreak of war in 1939 was numerically far stronger than it had been before Hitler's accession in 1933.<sup>4</sup>

### c. *National Centres*

Although it had wider overseas contacts than the L.S.I., the Socialist Youth International or the majority of the International Trade Secretariats, the I.F.T.U. was first and foremost a European organisation. At various times between 1931 and the outbreak of war five of its national centres had over a million members each.<sup>5</sup> Of these Great Britain had 3,600,000 in 1931 and 4,250,000 in 1937. Germany accounted for 4,500,000 in 1931 but the organisations there were smashed in 1933. Membership expanded rapidly in France as a result of the fusion of the C.G.T. and the Communist C.G.T.U. in 1936, and because of the favourable atmosphere created by Blum's Government, as well as in Spain during the bitter struggles against Franco. In France the figures jumped from 676,000 in 1931 to 5,400,000 in 1937, while in Spain they rose in the same period from 958,000 to 1,700,000. The other national centre with over a million members was the A.F. of L. in the United States, which affiliated on 2,500,000 members in 1937.

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 44.

<sup>2</sup> *I.F.T.U., Triennial Report 1933-35, Congress, London, 1936*. I.F.T.U. Paris, 1937, p. 410.

<sup>3</sup> *The International Trade Union Movement*, Vol. XVIII, Nos. 3-5, March-May, 1938, I.F.T.U., Paris, p. 14.

<sup>4</sup> 19,000,000 members were represented at the Congress held at Zurich in July 1939. *The International Trade Union Movement*, Vol. XIX, Nos. 6-7, June-July 1939. I.F.T.U., Paris, p. 189.

<sup>5</sup> The figures in this and the next few paragraphs are taken from the table in the *Eighth Year Book of the I.F.T.U.* Published by the I.F.T.U., Paris, 1938. Some of the 1937 figures are provisional.

There were also five national centres whose membership exceeded half-a-million. Austria had 580,000 in 1931 but the national centre there was destroyed in 1934. Belgium had 559,000 in 1931 and 560,000 in 1937, while in Sweden the figure grew from 589,000 to 783,000. In Czechoslovakia the membership was 610,000 in 1931 and 632,000 in 1937, but after the Munich agreements in 1938 the national centre in Czechoslovakia dropped out. Mexico was the remaining national centre in this category: the Mexican organisation affiliated in 1936 with a membership of 530,000.

Six national centres had each more than 200,000 members. These included Switzerland (with 206,000 in 1931 and 240,000 in 1937); Holland (319,000 and 284,000); Poland (204,000 and 220,000) and Denmark (269,000 and 470,000). Norway, which had dropped out in 1920 in order to safeguard the unity of the Norwegian trade union movement, re-affiliated with 214,000 in 1936.<sup>1</sup> Argentina also fell into this group, with 215,000 members in 1931, and 280,000 in 1937.

Two national centres had a membership of over 100,000. Canada had 162,000 members in 1931 and 140,000 in 1937. India came in with 136,000 in 1934; in 1937 the figure was 185,000. All the other organisations were relatively small. The largest were those in Hungary and Palestine, with 80,000 and 84,000 respectively in 1937.

It will have been noticed that the largest of the overseas organisations were the national centres in the United States, Mexico and Argentina. Of these, however, only the Argentine national centre had been associated with the I.F.T.U. for any length of time since its reconstitution in 1919. The United States and Mexico did not link up until a couple of years before the war. The other overseas affiliations in 1937 were in Palestine, Canada, South-West Africa, the Netherlands East Indies and India. South Africa was affiliated with 7,000 members in 1931; by 1932 the number had fallen to 1,000 and after 1935 the organisation dropped out altogether. Some years previously there had also been an affiliated national centre in Peru.

The overseas organisations did not play any considerable part in the activities of the I.F.T.U., or in shaping its policy. They were geographically remote from the centre of the I.F.T.U., which was in Europe, and most of them had too hard a struggle in their own countries to be able to afford time, energy, or money for international work. Some found it difficult to pay their affiliation fees or to send representatives to an occasional

<sup>1</sup> See also p. 31 for an account of a similar difficulty which arose between the Norwegian Labour Party and the L.S.I.

international Congress. To facilitate an exchange of views between overseas representatives and those from European organisations the international bodies arranged a number of *ad hoc* meetings of workers' delegates who happened to be attending Conferences of the I.L.O. at Geneva. Until the affiliation of the A.F. of L. none of the overseas organisations was represented on the Executive of the I.F.T.U., which meets several times a year.

d. *The I.F.T.U. at the Outbreak of War, 1939*

Although the I.F.T.U. had been able to increase its total membership in the period before the war, this did not alter the fact that a big hole had been made in its European affiliations. The membership in a few countries had risen, but in others the whole of the trade union movement had gone underground. Fresh losses were suffered, of course, during the war, as a result of the invasion of a number of countries by the Germans. Indeed, the only considerable organisations left in Europe were the British Trades Union Congress and the Swedish Trade Union Federation which, besides being in a neutral country, had very little actual contact under war-time conditions with the unions in Britain and overseas. Outside Europe the strongest affiliated body was the A.F. of L.

At the outbreak of war in 1939 the Secretariat of the I.F.T.U. was in Paris. From 1931 till 1933 it had been in Berlin and before 1931 in Amsterdam. The collapse of France in 1940 meant that the work of the Secretariat came to a sudden stop. The General Secretary, Walter Schevenels, and others, succeeded, however, in escaping to England, where the T.U.C. placed offices at their disposal. As the President, Sir Walter Citrine, was also in England, the principal officers of the I.F.T.U. were able to take the initiative in tying the threads together again. Contact was made with the A.F. of L. and in the course of time national trade union groups were formed under the auspices of the I.F.T.U. among trade unionists from several countries, who had taken refuge in England.

On July 23rd, 1942, the I.F.T.U. held an international trade union conference in London, composed of representatives of national and international bodies affiliated or associated with it. Representatives attended from the national centres of Great Britain, Norway and Palestine; from the Belgian, French, Polish, Czechoslovakian, Austrian, Spanish and German national trade union groups, and from eight of the International Trade

Secretariats.<sup>1</sup> At that time the I.F.T.U. had 13 normally-functioning affiliated national centres, with an aggregate membership of nearly 13 million. The Executive Committee of the Norwegian national centre, which had escaped from Norway, was able to speak for over 20,000 members taking part in the Allied war effort, and was accordingly recognised as a national centre. The conference decided to establish an Emergency International Trade Union Council, consisting of all former members of the I.F.T.U. Executive; one representative from each of the national centres of Great Britain, the United States, Canada, Argentina, Sweden, Palestine, Mexico and Norway; one each from seven of the International Trade Secretariats; and (in a consultative capacity) one each from the national trade union groups. It was also agreed that a joint organ should be published for the I.F.T.U. and the International Trade Secretariats.<sup>2</sup> The first issue of the new journal appeared in January 1943, under the title of *Trade Union World*. It was edited by Walter Schevenels, General Secretary of the I.F.T.U., with the assistance of Paul Tofahrn, Acting Assistant Secretary of the I.T.F., and the expenses were shared by their two organisations.

## 2. INTERNATIONAL TRADE SECRETARIATS

Before the war there were twenty-seven International Trade Secretariats recognised by the I.F.T.U. These, as we have seen, are the international organisations of trade unions in specific trades and industries. They exist alongside the I.F.T.U. and not in competition with it, and provision is made in the rules of the I.F.T.U. both for periodical joint conferences of the International Trade Secretariats and for joint meetings between the International Trade Secretariats and the I.F.T.U.<sup>3</sup>

### a. Composition

Unlike the I.F.T.U., which accepts only one affiliation from each country, the International Trade Secretariats are, as a rule, open to receive into affiliation all unions with members in the trade or industry with which they are concerned. Thus the International Transportworkers' Federation includes amongst its affiliated organisations the following unions from Great Britain: National Union of Railwaymen, Railway Clerks' Association of Great Britain and Ireland, Associated Society of

<sup>1</sup> See also below, p. 63.

<sup>2</sup> *Bulletin of the I.F.T.U.*, Nos. 16, 18, published by I.F.T.U., London, 1942.

<sup>3</sup> See also Chapter IV, p. 159, for an account of the relations between the International Trade Secretariats and the I.F.T.U.

Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, Transport and General Workers' Union, National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers, Cardiff, Penarth and Barry Coal Trimmers' Union, and the National Union of Seamen.

The aim of the I.T.F. is to organise all workers in every form of transport, but it cannot insist that all the transport workers' organisations in a given country should amalgamate into one union or join forces in a single federation. Nor can the other International Trade Secretariats demand in all cases that in each country there should be one single organisation of the workers in whom they are interested. The form of organisation which exists in any trade or industry is a matter for the trade union movement of the country itself. On the other hand, the I.F.T.U., which sets out to organise all workers in industry generally, is able to maintain that until there is one central organisation in a country, representing a substantial proportion of the organised workers, the movement in that country is not ripe for affiliation in the company of the other national trade union centres.

Not only can an International Trade Secretariat have several affiliated organisations in the same country, but it is also possible for a given trade union to belong to more than one International Trade Secretariat if it has members employed in more than one industry. In such cases the union does not affiliate to any International Trade Secretariat on its total membership, but divides up its support amongst them in proportion to its membership in the industries concerned. While the International Trade Secretariats are usually open to receive affiliations from more than one union in each country, there are cases in which difficulties are placed in the way of more than one affiliation. Thus the rules of the International Typographers' Secretariat<sup>1</sup> declare that only one union of typographers can be affiliated from each country; the Miners' International Federation<sup>2</sup> has a similar rule. The International Union of Federations of Workers in the Food and Drink Trades<sup>3</sup> stipulates that there shall be only one union 'of each trade' though exceptions to this rule can be permitted by the International Congress. Similarly, the rules of the International Clothing Workers' Federation<sup>4</sup> provide that the international congress is to be con-

<sup>1</sup> *Statuten des Internationalen Buchdrucker-Sekretariats*, Berne, 1930; *Statuts du Secrétariat International des Typographes*, Berne, 1930.

<sup>2</sup> *Rules of the Miners' International Federation*, 1938.

<sup>3</sup> *Constitution of the International Union of Federations of Workers engaged in the Food and Drink Trades*, Zurich, 1929.

<sup>4</sup> *Report of the Proceedings of the International Clothing Workers' Congress held at Copenhagen, Aug. 15th, 16th and 17th, 1920. Rules of the International Clothing Workers' Federation, List of affiliated organisations.* Published by the Secretariat of the I.C.W.F., Amsterdam.

sulted when more than one clothing workers' union in the same country applies for affiliation. The International Federation of Lithographers, Lithographic Printers and Kindred Trades<sup>1</sup> goes further. After declaring that as a rule only one organisation from each country shall be admitted to membership, the rule adds that where there is more than one organisation in a country attempts shall be made to unite them. If the Secretariat fails to promote unity the affiliation of an additional organisation may be accepted, provided that the union already affiliated raises no objection. In such cases, the Executive Committee is empowered to make stipulations with regard to amalgamation as a condition of admission.

In general, however, the rules of the International Trade Secretariats either make no mention of the principle of 'one country, one organisation' or simply provide that the consent of the union already affiliated is required before a second affiliation can be accepted.

Some of the International Trade Secretariats specifically refer to their relations with the I.F.T.U., and declare that their general policy and that of the I.F.T.U. are similar. In certain cases it is stipulated that organisations applying for affiliation to the International Trade Secretariats must already be affiliated with their trade union national centre. This is the case, for example, with the Postal, Telegraph and Telephone International,<sup>2</sup> the International Federation of Building and Wood Workers,<sup>3</sup> the International Federation of Textile Workers' Associations,<sup>4</sup> and the International Secretariat for the food and drink trades. The International Federation of Commercial, Clerical, and Technical Employees,<sup>5</sup> is prepared to admit forthwith organisations belonging to a national centre affiliated to the I.F.T.U., and is also willing to accept an organisation not affiliated to the national centre, provided that it endorses the platform of the I.F.T.U. and that the consent of the already-affiliated unions is forthcoming. The International Land Workers' Federation<sup>6</sup> requires every affiliated organisation to belong to its national centre except in special circumstances recognised by the Executive Committee of the I.L.F. In the case

<sup>1</sup> *Xth International Congress of the International Federation of Lithographers, Lithographic Printers and Kindred Trades, 1923*. Report containing Statutes.

<sup>2</sup> *Year-Book of the Postal, Telegraph and Telephone International, 1929*, containing Statutes.

<sup>3</sup> *Rules of the International Federation of Building and Wood Workers, 1937*.

<sup>4</sup> *Rules of the International Federation of Textile Workers' Associations, 1939*.

<sup>5</sup> *Rules of the International Federation of Commercial, Clerical and Technical Employees, 1938*.

<sup>6</sup> *Report of Secretary and Proceedings of the 8th Congress of the International Land Workers' Federation, 1938*, containing Statutes.

of the International Clothing Workers' Federation an application for affiliation from a union not affiliated to its appropriate national centre is to be the subject of consultation with the national centre itself.

#### b. *Aims and Objects*

In general the objects of the International Trade Secretariats are to promote the interests of the workers in the industries in which they are interested, to encourage the organisation of such workers, to arrange common action by the organisations in the different countries, and to provide for mutual help in times of trouble. The activities of the International Trade Secretariats in their own fields are, therefore, similar to those of the I.F.T.U. in the wider sphere. They attempt to promote the interests of workers in their respective industries both nationally and internationally. They are prepared to assist in the development of trade union organisation amongst those workers by giving advice, by providing information and sometimes by rendering financial assistance. Some of them have definite provisions to this effect in their rules. Most of the International Trade Secretariats are willing to give direct assistance to affiliated unions involved in strikes and lock-outs. This is not just a vague understanding, but is in a number of cases an undertaking embodied in special clauses of the rules, setting out the conditions in which financial assistance may be provided. Another form of activity which is common to most, if not all, of them is the protection of members proceeding from one country to another to take up work. It is usual for the conditions governing this assistance to be embodied either in the rules or in a reciprocity agreement. Affiliated unions accepting these conditions agree to accept members of affiliated unions from other countries without the usual formalities, and to give them rights and facilities comparable with those provided for their own members.

Some of the International Trade Secretariats take a longer view of their aims and objects. Whereas most of them are content with a statement of objects confined to mutual help and common action on the lines indicated above, there are some that plainly declare themselves in favour of workers' control, socialisation, or similar changes in the ownership and organisation of the industries in which they are interested. The International Secretariats for the food and drink trades, the lithographers and the commercial, clerical, and technical employees aim at the transformation of the capitalist system. The metal workers define one of their principal objects as the taking over of production,



while the workers in public services and the Miners' International Federation are pledged to the principle of socialisation.

As in the case of other international organisations, consideration has had to be given by the International Trade Secretariats to the autonomy of the organisations in the different countries. Not all of them refer to this problem in their rules. Where they do it is usually clear that the affiliated unions are expected to fulfil certain duties towards the international organisations but are free to pursue their activities at home according to their own judgment of the circumstances. The duties required of them may include the provision of information on conditions in their respective countries, the publication of international decisions, and the obligation to furnish financial assistance to other affiliated unions involved in industrial disputes. When they themselves claim such assistance it is expected that they will already have provided reasonable dispute funds out of their own resources, so as to make international help unnecessary except in unusually serious circumstances.<sup>1</sup>

The International Transportworkers' Federation<sup>2</sup> and the International Federation of Building and Wood Workers declare that every affiliated organisation shall retain its complete independence subject to the fulfilment of obligations imposed by the international rules, while a clause in the rules of the Postal, Telegraph and Telephone International provides that the autonomy of the affiliated organisations is 'safeguarded'. A rule of the International Federation of Lithographers, Lithographic Printers and Kindred Trades states that the autonomy of the national organisations is 'guaranteed', though affiliation implies an obligation to conform to the rules and to observe 'all duly authorised decisions'. The Secretariat for the food and drink trades has a rule which declares that the decisions of the Council are binding on affiliated unions and that the international decisions must be printed in the organs of the affiliated unions.

### c. *Membership Figures*

The twenty-seven International Trade Secretariats vary considerably in size and importance, and in the geographical distribution of their affiliated organisations. The metal workers, miners and transport workers each had over a million members before the collapse started in Germany.<sup>3</sup> At the end of 1931 the

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter V, p. 200.

<sup>2</sup> *Constitution of the International Transportworkers' Federation*, Amsterdam, 1930.

<sup>3</sup> The figures in this and the next few paragraphs are taken from *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1930-1932*. I.F.T.U., Paris, 1934, p. 42.

International Transportworkers' Federation had 2,300,000 members. The miners' membership was 1,458,000 and that of the metal workers 1,742,000. At this time the building workers and wood workers, with a membership of 897,000 and 895,000 respectively, were also approaching the million mark. In 1934 they amalgamated<sup>1</sup>, but just at that time they suffered losses, as did most of the other International Trade Secretariats.

Four further Secretariats had a membership of over half a million—commercial, clerical, and technical employees, who had 880,000 in 1931, textile workers (860,000), factory workers (580,000), and employees in public services (560,000).

There were several with figures varying between 200,000 and 500,000. They included the boot and shoe operatives and leather workers, the clothing workers, the food and drink trade workers, the land workers, the painters, the postal, telegraph and telephone employees, the civil servants, and the typographers. Of these the largest were the Postal, Telegraph and Telephone International, which had 430,000 members in 1931, and the International Land Workers' Federation, whose membership was 424,000. The International Federation of Employees in Public Services amalgamated in 1935 with the Civil Servants' International to form a new International Federation of Employees in Public and Civil Services.<sup>2</sup>

All the other Secretariats were relatively small. The bookbinders, pottery workers, stone workers, teachers and tobacco workers each had over 100,000 members in 1931. The remaining Secretariats, whose membership ranged from 80,000 down to 11,000, were the diamond workers, enginemen and firemen, glass workers (later administered by the I.F.T.U.), hairdressers, hatters, hotel, restaurant and bar workers, and the lithographers and lithographic printers.

#### d. *Overseas Affiliations*

European influence was predominant in all the International Trade Secretariats. Each of them had its headquarters and the bulk of its membership in Europe. In 1932, before Hitler came to power, 13 of the 29 Secretariats then in existence had their seats in Germany and Austria<sup>3</sup>, but on the destruction of the trade union organisations in those countries the offices of the International Trade Secretariats were transferred to Britain,

<sup>1</sup> I.F.T.U., *Triennial Report 1933-35. Congress, London, 1936.* I.F.T.U., Paris, 1937, p. 53.

<sup>2</sup> I.F.T.U., *Triennial Report 1933-35. Congress, London, 1936.* I.F.T.U., Paris, 1937, p. 54.

<sup>3</sup> *Activities of the I.F.T.U. 1930-32.* I.F.T.U., Paris, 1934, p. 44.

Scandinavia and the democratic countries of western Europe. Some of the Secretariats had no overseas affiliations at all, but two-thirds of them had one or two affiliated organisations outside Europe at one time or another. A few, such as the building workers, postal, telegraph and telephone employees, and transport workers, had several affiliated unions in countries overseas.

At various times organisations have been affiliated to one or other of the International Trade Secretariats from the United States of America and Canada; Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Rhodesia; Palestine, India, China, Japan and the Netherlands East Indies; Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Salvador and Uruguay; and various small colonial territories. The non-European countries which appear most frequently in the lists of affiliated unions are the United States and Palestine. Australian organisations have been affiliated to the International Trade Secretariats for the building workers, miners, postal workers, transport workers and typographers. Canadian unions have been linked up with the postal, building and transport workers, and New Zealand and South African unions with the building and transport workers. India, China and Japan are in touch with the transport workers only.

#### e. *Losses after 1932*

After 1932 the membership figures for most of the Secretariats showed a considerable decline. Practically all of them had affiliated unions in Germany and Central Europe, and in many cases the German unions accounted for the largest single block of members. In a number of other cases the largest block was in Great Britain. By 1935, when the full effects of the destruction of the German and Austrian unions had been felt, a third of the Secretariats had seen their membership halved.<sup>1</sup> Most of the others had dropped to two-thirds, one-third, or a quarter. Organisations left with about a quarter of their membership were the hatters and the enginemen and firemen. Those left with round about a third were the land workers, painters, stone workers and tobacco workers. Four Secretariats—the diamond workers, teachers, textile workers and transport workers—had been able to keep up their membership figures fairly well, though losses had been incurred in these cases too. The only Secretariat which had actually increased its membership was the International Clothing Workers' Federation. In later years there

<sup>1</sup> *Eighth Year Book of the I.F.T.U.* Published by the I.F.T.U., Paris, 1938, p. 171.

were still further set-backs, as in the cases of the L.S.I. and the I.F.T.U.

*f. Position at the Outbreak of War, 1939*

The outbreak of war found most of the International Trade Secretariats with headquarters on the continent of Europe. Only a few had their seats in Great Britain and none of them had its centre overseas. A few days before the war started the International Transportworkers' Federation transferred its headquarters from Holland to England and opened a sub-office in Paris, leaving a skeleton staff in Amsterdam. Its publications continued to appear from the new office in England. The German conquests in the West caused new complications. Some of the Secretariats had their head offices isolated in neutral countries. Others were able after an interval to transfer their activities, on a restricted scale, to England.

The International Transportworkers' Federation organised in England a union of Belgian, Dutch, Danish, French and Polish seamen. It maintained contacts with the transport workers' organisations in Britain and overseas and with the Norwegian seamen, who transferred their organisation to Britain and the United States in 1940. It also helped to set up organisations for the seamen of Yugoslavia, Greece, China and India. The Miners' International Federation came into prominence again on May 1st 1942, when it organised an International Miners' Conference for the first time since the beginning of the war. Another of the Secretariats to resume its activities was the International Metal Workers' Federation. Although the headquarters of the Federation were in Switzerland the British section called periodical meetings to which representatives of other countries exiled in Great Britain were invited.

At the International Trade Union Conference held by the I.F.T.U. in July 1942<sup>1</sup>, there were present, in addition to the delegates from the national centres and national trade union groups, representatives from the International Secretariats of the textile workers, transport workers, miners, metal workers, building workers, boot and shoe and leather workers, food and drink workers and commercial, clerical and technical employees. At this time five Trade Secretariats were in close contact with the I.F.T.U. and ten others, according to their varying circumstances, maintained looser links. The Trade Secretariats which were given representation on the new Emergency International Trade Union Council set up by the conference were the Secre-

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 55.

tariats for the transport workers, miners, metal workers, building and wood workers, textile workers, clothing workers and boot and shoe and leather workers.<sup>1</sup>

#### OTHER ORGANISATIONS

The other organisations in the international Labour and Socialist movement are concerned with special spheres of activity. They include the Socialist Workers' Sport International, the Workers' Wireless International and the International Alliance of Socialist Lawyers. But, as indicated at the head of this chapter, certain special subjects are dealt with not by separate organisations but by committees of the L.S.I. and the I.F.T.U. These Committees include the International Women's Committee of the L.S.I., the International Committee of Trade Union Women and the International Committee of the I.F.T.U. for Youth and Educational Questions.

#### 1. INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

An International Women's Conference was held at Hamburg in 1923 in connection with the Foundation Congress of the L.S.I., and by decision of the Conference an International Socialist Women's Committee was set up. In response to a request made by the Conference the Executive of the L.S.I. agreed to invite one of the women's representatives appointed at Hamburg to its meetings. Acting on a suggestion put forward by the women the Executive decided to hold another International Women's Conference immediately preceding the Second Congress of the L.S.I. at Marseilles in 1925 and to lay the reports and resolutions of this Conference before the Congress itself. The Marseilles Conference proposed, and the Congress agreed, that a standing International Women's Advisory Committee should be established by the L.S.I. to advise the Executive and to assist in organising further women's conferences in connection with the International Socialist Congresses. In recommending this step the women emphasised that they did not desire to create a separate organisation but merely wanted a committee that would help the Executive in the special work of recruiting women for Socialism.<sup>2</sup> The constitution for the International Women's Committee was adopted at a special conference of women held in Brussels in December 1926 and

<sup>1</sup> *Bulletin of the I.F.T.U.*, published by the I.F.T.U., London, 1942, Nos. 16 and 18.

<sup>2</sup> *Second Congress of the L.S.I., Marseilles, 1925*, pp. 99, 252, 291.

endorsed by the Executive of the L.S.I. in February 1927. It provided that the committee should consist of women representatives elected by the executive committees of the parties affiliated to the L.S.I. The Women's Committee itself was to elect a Presidium of five members and the administrative work was to be performed by the Secretariat of the L.S.I.<sup>1</sup>

One result of the creation of the Committee was that an impetus was given to International Socialist Women's Day. The celebration of Women's Day dated back to the International Socialist Women's Conference held in Copenhagen in 1910. In 1927, after the formation of the International Women's Committee, there were meetings and demonstrations in many countries, and in some of them the 'day' was extended to a couple of weeks, or even a month. Women's Day continued to be celebrated in this way by the Socialist women down to the outbreak of war in 1939.

Another result was the issue of a 'Women's Supplement' to the *International Information* published by the Secretariat of the L.S.I. for the use of the press. The decision to publish the supplement originated with the special Women's Conference held in 1926. During 1927 the supplement began to appear at monthly intervals, and its publication was continued down to the war.

A third Women's International Conference was held in 1928 on the occasion of the Brussels Congress of the L.S.I. Resolutions were passed by the Women's Conference on the Socialist demands of the political labour movement (a) for the mother and child, (b) for the woman in industry, and (c) respecting the care of the sick, crippled, invalid and aged, and these decisions were accepted by the Congress. A resolution on tendencies to mobilise women for military service was, however, referred to the Executive of the L.S.I. at the request of the Conference itself, so that the subject might be prepared for discussion at a future Congress of the L.S.I.<sup>2</sup>

The fourth Conference took place in connection with the Vienna Congress of the L.S.I. in 1931. This was the largest and most ambitious of the Conferences. It discussed (1) the progress of the Socialist women's movement since the Brussels Conference, with reference to women's suffrage, the organisation of women, the nationality of married women, and motherhood questions; (2) political reaction and its effects on the emancipation of women; and (3) women in the economic system. Under the last

<sup>1</sup> *Third Congress of the L.S.I., Brussels, 1928, Section III, p. 3.*

<sup>2</sup> *Third Congress of the L.S.I., Brussels, 1928, Section III; Section VI, p. 73; Section VII, p. 40; Section VIII, Section IX, p. 22.*

heading consideration was given to women's right to work, modern industry, and the employment of women, women in agriculture, domestic workers, and the position of the housewife. The resolutions on all these subjects were accepted by the Congress as they stood.<sup>1</sup>

Among other activities of the International Women's Committee were their efforts to promote political education amongst women. An example in this field was the international study week for women leaders held at Brussels in 1936, on the subject of economic and political democracy amongst women.<sup>2</sup>

From 1927 onwards meetings of the International Women's Committee and its Presidium were held once or twice a year. A representative of the Women's Committee also attended the meetings of the Executive of the L.S.I.

## 2. INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF TRADE UNION WOMEN

The International Committee of Trade Union Women is a body set up by the I.F.T.U. to assist it in dealing with questions arising out of the employment of women in industry. The Committee was established after the International Conference of Trade Union Women which was held in Vienna at the time of the International Trade Union Congress of 1924 to discuss the organisation of women in the trade unions. At that Conference the I.F.T.U. announced its willingness both to consider the appointment of such a committee and to organise international conferences of working women.<sup>3</sup>

An International Committee of Trade Union Women was therefore set up and in July 1927 a second International Trade Union Women's Conference was held in Paris. This, too, took place on the occasion of an International Trade Union Congress. Resolutions were passed at the Conference, and confirmed by the Congress, on homework, the protection of women workers, and the economic significance of women's work for wages.<sup>4</sup> No provision was made for a women's conference in connection with the Stockholm Congress of 1930, but a further conference was held at the same time as the Brussels Congress of 1933 to

<sup>1</sup> *Fourth Congress of the L.S.I., Vienna, 1931*, Section III, Section VI, p. 85, and Section IX.

<sup>2</sup> *International Study Week organised by the International Women's Committee of the L.S.I., Belgian Labour College, Uccle, Brussels, August 1936*. Subject: Economic and Political Democracy and Women. Issued by the Secretariat of the Labour and Socialist International.

<sup>3</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1922-24*. I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1924, pp. 115, 173, 261.

<sup>4</sup> *Proceedings of the Fourth Congress of the I.F.T.U., 1927*. I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1927, pp. 94, 209, 235, 274.

discuss women's work in times of crisis and rationalisation, women's wages, and the situation in Germany.<sup>1</sup> The Fourth International Conference of Trade Union Women was held in London in 1936. The agenda, which was fuller than that of the previous Conferences, included the subjects of women and the 40-hour week, night work for women in industry, women's right to work, with particular reference to the restrictive measures taken against this right in certain countries, and the legal status and nationality of women.<sup>2</sup>

This was the last Conference held before the war, but in July 1937 a meeting of the International Committee of Trade Union Women considered questions connected with home workers, domestic workers, equal pay for equal work, and the women's peace campaign.<sup>3</sup>

The Committee was a small body of half-a-dozen members, with the function of advising the I.F.T.U., but without any independent activities. It did not meet at regular intervals, nor were its meetings numerous. Its advice was, however, always available to the I.F.T.U. by correspondence.

### 3. YOUTH AND EDUCATION

An International Trade Union Committee for Youth and Educational Questions has been in existence since 1926. Before that time various attempts had been made to develop activities on these questions, both by the I.F.T.U. and by the young Socialist organisations. There had been, for example, an International Committee for the Protection of Young Workers, set up by the young Socialists in 1922, and later taken over by the I.F.T.U., while the I.F.T.U. had begun to organise young workers' international summer schools.<sup>4</sup> In 1924 the I.F.T.U. held an International Conference on Workers' Education at Oxford, as a result of which consideration was given to the possibility of forming a Workers' Educational International. After consultation with the national centres, however, it was decided not to set up a separate organisation, but to entrust the development of educational work to an advisory committee of the I.F.T.U. itself. A committee was accordingly established in September 1926. Two months later it was combined with the

<sup>1</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1930-32*. I.F.T.U., Paris, 1934, pp. 62, 289, 393, 395.

<sup>2</sup> *I.F.T.U., Triennial Report, 1933-35. Congress, London, 1936*, I.F.T.U., Paris, 1937, pp. 84, 179, 355.

<sup>3</sup> *The International Trade Union Movement*, I.F.T.U., Paris, Vol. XVIII, Nos. 6-7, June-July, 1939, p. 43.

<sup>4</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1922-24*, I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1924, p. 111.



existing youth committee to become the International Trade Union Committee for Youth and Educational Questions. Membership of the Committee is open to representatives of the national centres and the secretarial work is performed by the Secretariat of the I.F.T.U.<sup>1</sup>

The tasks of the Committee are to protect young workers and promote workers' education, particularly education in trade unionism. It organises summer schools and youth weeks and has given its attention to such matters as the protection of young workers, the training of apprentices, youth legislation, the international education of young trade unionists, the position of unemployed youth, the use of leisure, the cinema and broadcasting. In dealing with these matters it has endeavoured to secure the co-operation of the workers' educational organisations in the various countries.<sup>2</sup>

In 1935 an International Centre for Workers' Education was founded by the I.F.T.U. to co-ordinate the activities of the educational centres in the international sphere. Although the idea of a Workers' Educational International sponsored by the I.F.T.U. had not materialised, the workers' educational organisations of several countries had been in contact with one another. Information regarding the activities of the existing workers' educational associations and film centres was obtained by the I.F.T.U. from its affiliated organisations, and as a result of this enquiry the Secretariat of the I.F.T.U. was charged by the General Council in June 1935 with the formation of an international workers' educational centre. A plan of activities for the centre was adopted by a conference of representatives from the various workers' educational organisations held in Brussels a fortnight later. The work was to be carried out 'in accordance with a decision taken by the General Council of the I.F.T.U. in agreement with the L.S.I. and in co-operation with the competent International Trade Secretariat', i.e. the Teachers'

<sup>1</sup> *I.F.T.U. Report on Activities, 1924-26*, I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1927, p. 111.

<sup>2</sup> See accounts of the Committee's work in the following:—

*The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1927-30. Congress, Stockholm, 1930.* I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1931, p. 98.

*The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1930-32*, I.F.T.U., Paris, 1934, pp. 57, 377, 386.

*I.F.T.U. Triennial Report, 1933-35. Congress, London, 1936*, I.F.T.U., Paris, 1937, pp. 77, 175.

*The International Trade Union Movement*, I.F.T.U., Paris, Vol. XVII, Nos. 1-7, January-July, 1937, pp. 22, 38.

*The International Trade Union Movement*, I.F.T.U., Paris, Vol. XVIII, Nos. 3-5, March-May 1938, p. 42.

*The International Trade Union Movement*, I.F.T.U., Paris, Vol. XIX, Nos. 6-7, June-July 1939, p. 213.

International. Further international conferences were held in London in 1936 and in Zurich in 1939.<sup>1</sup>

Quite apart from the International Centre for Workers' Education there is a Socialist Educational International which held its first Conference in Hanover in 1924 in the presence of representatives of the I.F.T.U. and L.S.I. The Socialist Educational International devoted itself in the main to the question of child education and was particularly interested in the activities of the Red Falcon organisation in the various countries. Friendly relations with this International were maintained by both the I.F.T.U. and the L.S.I.<sup>2</sup> The Socialist Youth International was also in contact with the Socialist Educational International and the two bodies appointed a Joint Committee for educational questions.

There was also a Socialist Students' International consisting of the organisations of Socialist students at universities and high schools. This body, as we have seen, was collectively affiliated to the Socialist Youth International.

#### 4. SPORT AND CULTURE

##### a. *Sport*

An International Socialist Federation for promoting workers' sports and physical culture was in existence before the last war. It was formed in 1913 and reconstituted in 1920 as a Socialist Workers' Sport International, with the object of promoting sports and games amongst the workers, and especially amongst young people. Its aim was not simply sport for sport's sake, but the encouragement of sport as a means of contributing to world peace. To this end it not only sponsored sports and games in the different countries but held international sports gatherings and international congresses for the furtherance of its activities. On two occasions, at Frankfurt in 1925 and Vienna in 1931, it organised a large-scale International Workers' Olympiad.

In its desire to contribute to the peace of the world it took as its guide the policy advocated by the L.S.I. The Executive

<sup>1</sup> I.F.T.U., *Triennial Report, 1933-35. Congress, London, 1936.* I.F.T.U., Paris, 1937, pp. 78, 465.

*The International Trade Union Movement*, I.F.T.U., Paris, Vol. XVII, Nos. 1-7, January-July 1937, p. 23.

*The International Trade Union Movement*, I.F.T.U., Paris, Vol. XVIII, Nos. 3-5, March-May 1938, p. 43.

*The International Trade Union Movement*, I.F.T.U., Paris, Vol. XIX, Nos. 6-7, June-July 1939, p. 215.

<sup>2</sup> I.F.T.U., *Triennial Report 1933-35. Congress, London, 1936.* I.F.T.U., Paris, 1937, p. 84. *Second Congress of the L.S.I., Marseilles, 1925*, p. 100.

of the L.S.I., in its turn, requested the affiliated parties in 1927 to support the workers' sport movement and instructed the Bureau of the L.S.I. to examine the question of the relations between the L.S.I. and the Socialist Workers' Sport International.<sup>1</sup>

Close contact between the two organisations was established and maintained. Representatives of the Executive of the L.S.I. attended and spoke at the Congresses of the Sport International and in 1931 the final demonstration and procession of the Workers' Olympiad was organised as a prelude to the International Socialist Congress which was held during the following week. In 1929 the Sport International supported the petition campaign organised by the L.S.I. and the I.F.T.U. in connection with the opening of the World Disarmament Conference at Geneva. Many of the petitions sent in were collected by the sports organisations themselves.<sup>2</sup>

The Socialist Workers' Sport International was recognised not only by the L.S.I. but also by the I.F.T.U. and the Socialist Youth International, who sent representatives to its meetings and congresses. The membership of the affiliated organisations in the various countries was 380,000 in 1938.

The British Section of the Socialist Workers' Sport International is the British Workers' Sport Association.

#### b. *Films*

Before the war attempts were being made in the Labour and Socialist movement to develop the use of films for educational purposes. A Workers' Film Association had been formed in Great Britain, with the support of the Trades Union Congress, the Labour Party, and the Co-operative Union,<sup>3</sup> and similar organisations existed in various other countries. In February 1933 the L.S.I. and the I.F.T.U. held a joint meeting of film experts belonging to their respective affiliated organisations. A joint committee was appointed to consider the production of labour films, the possibility of forming a film consumers' co-operative society, an international register of workers' films, the film market and various technical problems. It was hoped that it would eventually be possible to create an International Office of Labour Films. Particular interest was taken in these subjects in Germany, and the German trade unions agreed to

<sup>1</sup> *Third Congress of the L.S.I., Brussels, 1928, Section II, p. 44.*

<sup>2</sup> *Fourth Congress of the L.S.I., Vienna, 1931, p. 143. Handbook of International Organisations, League of Nations, Geneva, 1938.*

<sup>3</sup> *Thirty-eighth Annual Conference of the Labour Party, Southport, 1939, p. 102. Seventy-first Annual Trades Union Congress, Bridlington, 1939, p. 268.*

undertake the necessary preliminary work. Before many months had passed, however, not only the unions themselves but all the cultural organisations in the German labour movement were smashed.<sup>1</sup>

### c. *Radio*

The international labour movement also paid considerable attention to wireless questions. Groups of amateur wireless enthusiasts in several countries studied technical radio questions, experimented with transmitting as well as receiving sets, and exchanged messages across the frontiers. In some countries provision was made for special workers' programmes in the national broadcasting services.

In 1930 a Workers' Wireless International was founded to safeguard the interests of the working class in relation to radio questions and to ensure that the workers' cultural organisations should influence the development of wireless from the point of view of organisation, technique, and culture. Six international congresses were held before the outbreak of war and a radio information service was published.<sup>2</sup>

The Workers' Wireless International enjoyed the goodwill of both the I.F.T.U. and the L.S.I. The I.F.T.U., in particular, gave serious consideration to wireless questions. Amongst other things it examined the possibility of reserving periods in the Radio Luxemburg transmissions for international workers' programmes—a possibility that was closed to the L.S.I. for political reasons—but the problem of organising and financing the programme was still unsolved when the war broke out.

## 5. INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF SOCIALIST LAWYERS

There is one other organisation of interest in this connection—the International Alliance of Socialist Lawyers. Owing to the repressive activities of various Governments, the frequency with which martial law or a state of emergency were enforced in one country or another, and the operation of the laws concerning the press, the right of assembly and the freedom of association, it was no uncommon thing for Socialists and trade unionists to find themselves accused of political offences. During the period between the two wars many thousands of them spent periods as political prisoners or only escaped persecution by taking refuge

<sup>1</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1930-32.* I.F.T.U., Paris, 1934, p. 58. *I.F.T.U., Triennial Report, 1933-35. Congress, London, 1936.* I.F.T.U., Paris, 1937, p. 78.

<sup>2</sup> *Handbook of International Organisations, League of Nations, Geneva, 1938.*

in other countries. It was a problem that faced the labour movement in almost every country in Europe—from Finland and the Baltic States to Italy and the Balkans, from Poland in the East to Spain and Portugal in the West. In many of the overseas countries the problem was just as acute.

To advise it on legal questions arising out of these conditions, the L.S.I. encouraged the formation of an International Alliance of Socialist Lawyers. The organisation was founded at the time of the Brussels Congress of the L.S.I. in 1928, when associations of Socialist lawyers were in existence in Germany and Austria. After the formation of the Alliance similar organisations were started in a number of other countries, including France, Belgium, Holland, Luxemburg, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Roumania, Poland, Estonia and Latvia.<sup>1</sup>

A second International Conference of Socialist Lawyers was held at the time of the Vienna Congress in 1931, by which time the combined membership of the organisations in the various countries was over 1,500. The conference was attended by 81 lawyers from 15 countries. It drew up proposals for safeguarding the political right of asylum and suggestions for protecting the rights of political prisoners. It also recommended the abolition of the death penalty. The secretarial work of the Alliance, both before and after 1931, was undertaken by the Social-Democratic Lawyers' Association in Germany.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Third Congress of the L.S.I., Brussels, 1928*, Section VII, p. 106.

<sup>2</sup> *Fourth Congress of the L.S.I., Vienna, 1931*, pp. 143, 788.

## CHAPTER III

### WORK OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR MOVEMENT—POLITICAL

THE international organisations of the labour movement are not super-national authorities but co-ordinating bodies. They do not maintain independent executive organs in the various countries but depend in the main upon their affiliated organisations to carry out their decisions as far as the national circumstances permit.

Reference was made in Chapter I to some of the subjects which have occupied the attention of the international organisations at various times, while in Chapter II an account was given of their aims and objects. It is, however, necessary to examine the nature and scope of their work more fully if their position is to be properly assessed.

The international bodies have, of course, their problems of organisation and finance, and their special activities in connection with women's questions, youth problems, education, political prisoners and so on. But their main work is the formulation of policy. It is through the international bodies that the organisations in the various countries attempt to reach agreement on the attitude to be adopted and the action to be taken in given circumstances. Much depends on how far the constituent organisations can agree on fundamental principles, for if they see eye to eye on these it is easier for them to define their attitude towards problems that call for decision and action. If, however, the outlook and circumstances of the affiliated national organisations vary so greatly that the basic ideas of the international bodies are not clearly formulated and firmly held, then international decisions will lack authority and international action will be robbed of its force.

#### WORK OF THE L.S.I.

##### I. FORMULATION OF POLICY

The policy of the L.S.I. was set out in the resolutions and manifestos issued from time to time. There was no basic document containing a comprehensive statement of its policy. During the first ten years of its existence, i.e. down to 1933, the L.S.I. succeeded in drawing up long-term proposals concerning

such subjects as colonial policy, the League of Nations, disarmament, unemployment and economic crises, and the struggle against Fascism and reaction. Some of these proposals were worked out by the L.S.I. alone; others were prepared in association with the I.F.T.U. Hardly any long-range policies were produced, however, during the last few years before the war. This was not merely because of the pressure of political and economic events in the international field; it was also due partly to the differences in the attitude of the affiliated parties towards the Governments of their respective countries, and partly to the absence of agreement on basic principles. These factors greatly influenced the nature and extent of the work of the L.S.I. in formulating policy. The rapidly changing international situation confronted the L.S.I. with problems (not of its own choice) that called for immediate pronouncements; the fact that some parties were represented in Governments, some in opposition, some illegal and some in exile affected the power of the L.S.I. to take effective decisions; and the differences in outlook on fundamentals coloured the approach of the parties to the various problems that arose. Agreement on policy would have been much easier to achieve if the parties had been starting more or less from the same premises, i.e. if there had been general agreement on such basic problems as democracy and dictatorship, revolution and peaceful change, participation in Governments, national defence, parliamentary institutions, national and international loyalties, or the place of the labour movement in the State.<sup>1</sup>

#### a. *Political Questions*

Most of the attention of the L.S.I. was devoted, of course, to political questions—some of general concern and others relating to particular countries or subjects. Among the subjects of a general nature were reparations and war debts, the League of Nations, disarmament, the Geneva Protocol, arbitration in international disputes, collective security, dictatorships, reaction and Fascism. Subjects such as these were considered both by the Congresses of the L.S.I. and by the meetings of its Executive and Bureau. To enable the members of the Bureau and Executive to take a wide sweep it became the practice to head the agenda of their meetings with some such item as the 'International Political Situation' or the 'World Political Situation'. Resolutions were then drafted on the points brought out in the general discussion.

Among the questions relating to particular countries or subjects

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter I, p. 12.

were the demands for self-determination for Armenia and for the re-establishment of the sovereignty of Georgia, the problem of the frontiers of central Europe and the Balkans, and the question of the occupation of the Ruhr, all of which came up at the first Congress in 1923. Matters arising at the second Congress in 1925 included the war in Morocco and the dangers of war in the East. Questions concerning other countries and regions were dealt with by later Congresses, i.e. in 1928 and 1931, and by meetings of the Bureau and Executive—Abyssinia, Czechoslovakia, the Danube Basin, the Sino-Japanese conflict, and the civil war in Spain were examples. There were many other specific subjects that did not relate to particular countries, such as the fight against alcoholism, the abolition of the death penalty, education for Socialism, refugees, the rights of minorities, and the persecution of the Jews.

### b. *Industrial Questions*

The economic and industrial subjects dealt with by the L.S.I. were not so numerous; in later years such matters were rarely handled by the L.S.I. alone, as it was felt to be desirable to discuss them with the I.F.T.U., even where their solution depended to a large extent upon action in the political field. The first Congress of the L.S.I. in 1923, however, included proposals for economic measures in its resolution on the imperialist peace, and also passed a resolution on the eight-hour day and international social reform, though this was in support of the policy already decided upon by the I.F.T.U. At the second Congress consideration was given to agricultural policy, the eight-hour day, and unemployment. Subjects dealt with later included capitalism and war, the post-war economic situation and the economic policy of the working class, the ratification of the Washington Eight-Hours Convention, the World Economic Conference, and the economic situation in Germany and central Europe.<sup>1</sup>

Many of the resolutions and manifestos on both political and economic problems were, of course, designed to meet the immediate needs of a given situation. More important were the decisions on long-term policy. These usually involved more preparation, received more mature consideration and had a more lasting effect upon the policies of the individual parties.

<sup>1</sup> *Resolutions of the Labour and Socialist Congress, Hamburg, 1923*. Published by the Secretariat of the L.S.I. *Second Congress of the L.S.I., Marseilles, 1925*, p. 284. *Third Congress, Brussels, 1928*, Section IX, p. 3. *Fourth Congress, Vienna, 1931*, p. 889.



### *c. Colonial Policy*

An outstanding example of these pronouncements on long-range questions was the resolution on the colonial problem carried by the third Congress of the L.S.I. in Brussels in 1928. Following a decision taken in Marseilles in 1925, that the colonial question should be discussed at the next Congress, the Executive of the L.S.I. set up a colonial commission consisting of representatives from Great Britain, France, Belgium, Holland and a few other countries. This commission drew up a questionnaire for submission to the affiliated parties in countries possessing colonies or mandates, and also to the parties in the colonial and mandated territories. The object of the questionnaire was to obtain information on conditions in the colonies, on Government policy, and on the attitude of the labour and Socialist parties, as a basis for discussion at the Congress. The discussion was expected to result in the adoption of a 'programme of constructive colonial policy' capable of leading to the realisation of self-government. Detailed information was requested on the systems of government in colonial territories, the development of colonial resources, the improvement in the conditions of the natives, international responsibility for the government of non-self-governing peoples, freedom of opinion and right of association, colonial labour movements, problems of race and nationality and military service in the colonies.

Full replies to the questionnaire were provided by the British Labour Party, the Socialist Parties of France, Italy and the United States, and the Social-Democratic Parties of Holland and Denmark, while further details were provided by Labour Parties or trade unions in South Africa, Canada, Trinidad and Palestine. These replies were printed and submitted to the Congress in 1928, together with a resolution drafted by the commission itself. The resolution referred to capitalist expansion in colonial territories, the social and cultural evolution of colonial peoples and the need to abolish the colonial system as a preliminary condition for any international commonwealth. It declared the support of the L.S.I. for the struggle of subject peoples for emancipation, outlined the steps towards self-government that could be taken in colonies with a higher form of civilisation, and called for a number of economic and political measures in the interests of the native communities in colonies with a primitive culture. The resolution, which was adopted by the Congress unanimously, became the basis for subsequent international decisions on colonial matters and also served as a guide for the affiliated parties. By taking part in the work of

preparing this international policy the affiliated parties had, of course, been stimulated to clarify their own views on the matter.<sup>1</sup>

#### d. *Problems of the League of Nations*

Careful consideration was given at various times to problems of the League of Nations. At the time of the Brussels Congress in 1928 the L.S.I. decided to set up a Commission for the Democratisation of the League of Nations, with Senator Louis de Brouckère of Belgium as President. In 1930 the work of the Commission was extended to cover League problems in general, and its name was changed to Commission of the L.S.I. for Problems of the League of Nations. The eight members of the Commission, who included experts such as Dr. Rudolf Breitscheid of Germany and Professor Osten Undén of Sweden, followed the affairs of the League and produced proposals for action on matters which were under consideration at Geneva.

Their first report was drafted with an eye to the League Assembly of 1930 and was accepted by the Executive of the L.S.I. in August of that year. It dealt in a preliminary way with the draft of a general convention to strengthen the means of preventing war; the draft convention on financial assistance to a State in case of aggression; the question of the ratification and signature of conventions concluded under the auspices of the League of Nations; the organisation of the Secretariat, the I.L.O. and the Registry of the Permanent Court of International Justice; the ratification of the General Act and the Optional Clause; and the economic work of the League and the organisation of Europe. Members of the Commission undertook to study these questions further and to bring up another report for a later meeting.<sup>2</sup>

A second report was drawn up in February 1931. This too was adopted by the Executive of the L.S.I. It contained further recommendations on subjects dealt with in the first document, and also proposals for amending the Covenant of the League to bring it into harmony with the Pact of Paris and for conferring upon the Permanent Court of International Justice jurisdiction as a tribunal of appeal in respect of arbitral tribunals established by States.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to publishing these reports in pamphlet form the L.S.I. also brought out from time to time a supplement to

<sup>1</sup> *Third Congress of the L.S.I., Brussels, 1928, Section V.*

<sup>2</sup> Pamphlets of the L.S.I., No. 2, *Problems of the League of Nations*. Published by the Secretariat of the L.S.I., Zurich.

<sup>3</sup> Bulletin of the L.S.I., Series 2, No. 9. *Fourth Congress of the L.S.I., Vienna, 1931, p. 94.*

*International Information* called *Problems of the League of Nations*.

e. *Disarmament*

For some years the L.S.I. devoted a large part of its time and energy to the problems of disarmament. These questions were not merely debated; they were also carefully studied. In 1926, when the Preparatory Commission of the Disarmament Conference began its work, the Executive of the L.S.I. decided to set up a Disarmament Commission, consisting of J. W. Albarda (Holland) as Chairman, Louis de Brouckère (Belgium), Hermann Müller (Germany), C. T. Cramp (Great Britain), Pierre Renaudel (France) and Julius Deutsch (Austria). At its first meeting in August 1926 the Commission drew up a questionnaire which was submitted to the affiliated parties. A year later the Commission produced a very full report in the light of the replies received, and in February 1928 it drew up further proposals, which became the basis for the resolution on militarism and disarmament that was adopted by the Brussels Congress later in the year.<sup>1</sup>

After the Congress the L.S.I. pressed for the completion of the work of the Preparatory Disarmament Commission of the League, so that the Disarmament Conference itself might be summoned. To this end it organised a petition campaign and sent a deputation to the meeting of the Preparatory Disarmament Commission in Geneva in April 1929. In November of that year there was a debate on disarmament in the Bureau of the L.S.I., by which time it had become necessary to consider the problems of the Naval Disarmament Conference, which was due to meet in London in January 1930, as well as the work of the Preparatory Commission. Again the Disarmament Commission of the L.S.I. drew up a report. The work of the London Conference was discussed in March 1930 by a joint meeting of the Bureau of the L.S.I. and the Executive of the I.F.T.U., and a manifesto, inspired by the Commission's report, was published over the signatures of Emile Vandervelde, President of the L.S.I., and Walter M. Citrine, President of the I.F.T.U.<sup>2</sup>

Two months later the Executive of the L.S.I. considered the disarmament problem again on the basis of yet another document submitted by the Disarmament Commission of the L.S.I., which then consisted of Albarda, de Brouckère, Renaudel,

<sup>1</sup> *Third Congress of the L.S.I., Brussels, 1928*, Section I, p. 79.

<sup>2</sup> *Fourth Congress of the L.S.I., Vienna, 1931*, pp. 65-74. *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1930-32*. I.F.T.U., Paris, 1934, p. 80.

Alsing Anderson (Denmark), Otto Bauer (Austria), Rudolf Breitscheid (Germany), William Gillies (Great Britain), Per Albin Hansson (Sweden) and G. E. Modigliani (Italy). The Commission went into the difficulties surrounding the work of the Preparatory Disarmament Commission and suggested steps that might be taken to conclude the draft of a disarmament convention. Their document was printed and circulated on the instructions of the Executive and also forwarded to the Preparatory Disarmament Commission.<sup>1</sup>

When the Naval Disarmament Conference had concluded its task, the attention of Governments was again turned to the work of the Preparatory Disarmament Commission, and by the end of the year a Draft Convention had been prepared. The decision of the League Council that the Disarmament Conference should meet in February 1932 was followed by a further discussion in the Executive of the L.S.I., in February 1931—again on the basis of a report prepared by the chairman of the Disarmament Commission of the L.S.I. On this occasion the Executive put forward further proposals for action. Meantime the I.F.T.U. had been interesting itself in the problem as well and had expressed a wish to co-operate with the L.S.I. in the work of the international labour movement concerning the Disarmament Conference. In response to this desire the Executive of the L.S.I. agreed at the meeting in February 1931 to the setting up of a Joint Disarmament Commission of the L.S.I. and the I.F.T.U. From then onwards the question was studied by the two organisations in common.<sup>2</sup>

The texts of the studies and reports on disarmament were printed by the L.S.I. in its Congress reports, in pamphlets and in a special supplement to *International Information* entitled *Disarmament*. These documents not only formed the basis for a long-term international policy but also influenced the disarmament programme of the parties in the individual countries. No doubt they will be consulted by the parties again when the disarmament question is re-opened.

#### f. *Fascism and Reaction*

All these policies were worked out before the last Congress of the L.S.I. in 1931, as also was a long-term programme on unemployment and the economic crisis, which was prepared in collaboration with the I.F.T.U.<sup>3</sup> After the Congress there was

<sup>1</sup> Pamphlets of the L.S.I. No. 1, *Disarmament*.

<sup>2</sup> See below, p. 103.

<sup>3</sup> *Fourth Congress of the L.S.I., Vienna, 1931*, pp. 74-85.

less opportunity for pursuing the study of subjects over an extended period, as the labour movement was faced with the necessity of defining its attitude towards crisis after crisis in international affairs. There was, however, one subject in particular on which the L.S.I. laid down a long-term policy for the guidance of the affiliated parties. The question of opposing Fascism and reaction had been debated by the International Socialist Congresses and considered by meetings of the Bureau and Executive, while the parties had also been confronted with the problem in their respective countries. The overthrow of the Social-Democratic Party and the trade union movement in Germany in 1933 caused the L.S.I. to re-examine its position, and a Conference was accordingly held in Paris in August 1938 to discuss 'The Strategy and Tactics of the International Labour Movement during the Period of Fascist Reaction.'

This was the first and only occasion on which a Conference was held instead of a full Congress, in accordance with a new rule adopted by the Brussels Congress in 1928. Parties were entitled to be represented at these Conferences by three times as many delegates as they had representatives on the Executive of the L.S.I. As the Conferences would be fully representative and yet smaller than the Congresses, it was thought that they could be called to discuss specific issues for which a full-scale Congress would not be necessary. The Paris Conference was attended by delegates from 36 parties in 30 countries and by representatives of the International Socialist Women's Committee, the International of Socialist Youth, the I.F.T.U., the Socialist Workers' Sport International, the Workers' Wireless International and the Socialist Educational International.

In the course of three days over thirty speeches were made in the general debate. For the best part of two further days the discussion was continued at meetings of a commission and a drafting sub-committee, after which a lengthy resolution was submitted to the full Conference and adopted by 291 votes to 18, with 5 abstentions.

The resolution drew attention to the inability of capitalism to use the productive forces which it had developed and to make available to the workers the fruits of their labour. Under the pressure of the economic crisis the structure of capitalist economy had been profoundly changed, while democracy had been severely shaken in the countries in which it had not been deeply rooted before 1914. Only the Socialist movement was capable of leading humanity towards a social order in which the productive forces could be used to the full; it alone was capable of guaranteeing a lasting peace based on the equality of the peoples and of

preserving individual and intellectual liberties. It was therefore necessary for the working class to intensify its struggle against capitalism, Fascism and war.

As to the methods to be adopted, the resolution recommended that the approach should differ according to the circumstances of each country. In countries in which Fascism had prevailed, the dictatorship could only be overthrown by a revolution, which should not merely break the power of Fascism but destroy its economic foundations. Where democracy was still in force the working class should defend its individual and collective liberties as well as universal suffrage and the freedom of trade union organisation. But democracy could only retain its hold over the people by vigorous action. It could only be effectively defended to the extent to which it developed from political democracy to social democracy. In countries in which democracy was threatened the working class would need to endeavour by every means at its disposal to repel the attacks of Fascism. Even the Communists were now obliged to recognise that the workers must defend democratic institutions. The split in the working-class ranks could not be justified. While rejecting all united front manoeuvres the L.S.I. would spare no effort to reunite the scattered forces of the working class.

Various proposals for action were included in the resolution—demonstrations, financial assistance for the victims of Fascism, a moral and material boycott of Hitlerism, and action by the democratic Governments through the League of Nations. The workers were warned against the dangers of war, but if war should break out they would have a twofold duty—on the one hand to preserve the full independence and liberty of action of their organisations and, on the other hand, to maintain their relations with the International with a view to working for the earliest possible cessation of hostilities.<sup>1</sup> The discussions and decisions of this Conference were of particular importance, since they profoundly influenced the subsequent activities of the L.S.I. in relation to these great problems.

### *g. Current Problems*

This was the last occasion before the war on which a long-term policy was so thoroughly examined, either by a representative

<sup>1</sup> *After the German Catastrophe.* The Decisions of the International Conference of the L.S.I. in Paris, August 1933, and the Explanatory Speech of the Rapporteur Otto Bauer, Zurich, 1933. Published by the Labour and Socialist International.

*Proceedings. International Conference of the L.S.I., Paris, Maison de la Mutualité, August 21st-25th, 1933.* Published by the Labour and Socialist International. See also Chapter VI, p. 244.

conference or by a small body of experts. During the next six years the L.S.I. gave considerable time to the problems created by the rearmament of Germany, the withdrawal of Germany from the League, the rise of dictatorship in Austria, the Italian campaign in Abyssinia, the civil war in Spain, the German invasion of Austria, the partition of Czechoslovakia and the Japanese attack upon China.<sup>1</sup> Some of these problems—and there were many more—came up again and again, and were debated at considerable length. Crisis followed crisis so rapidly, however, that every discussion took place in a new set of circumstances. The matters before the L.S.I. during this period, in fact, were for the most part questions of the moment. The problems were of great difficulty and of vital importance. They followed quickly upon one another and they called for immediate action. It was not surprising, therefore, that the tactical needs of the day received more attention than the elaboration of a grand strategy. The British Labour Party, bitterly opposed to the policy of the National Government, the French Socialist Party, first in opposition and then as the leading partner in a Popular Front Government, the Social-Democratic Parties of Scandinavia, largely responsible for the government of their respective countries, the once-powerful Social-Democratic movements of Germany and Austria, pursuing a policy of revolution through underground channels—all these and many other diverse elements, working in different circumstances and with varying kinds and degrees of responsibility, needed an agreed plan, with clearly-defined objectives to guide them in their common task of striving for international Socialism and peace. That plan could not be worked out, for the claims of the immediate situation were too insistent and the differences of approach among the affiliated parties too strongly marked. The position was similar to that of the Governments. They too needed a strategy for the defence of peace and democracy and the solution of pressing social problems, but they too lived from one day to the next.

These factors, while they help to account for some of the decisions taken during that critical period, do not, of course, explain away the mistakes and failures. The greater the danger the greater the need for clear thought and resolute action. Unfortunately, at a time when these were needed most the L.S.I. was hampered by weaknesses in organisation, by lack of unity on questions of principle, and, not least, by the failure of its affiliated parties to gain sufficient support for their ideas in their own countries.

<sup>1</sup> *International Information*, published by the Secretariat of the L.S.I. Issues for 1933-1939. See also below, pp. 110-116.

## 2. ORGANISATION

If the most important work of the L.S.I. was the formulation of policy the basis of that work was organisation. Problems of organisation and finance therefore occupied a prominent place at the meetings of the Bureau and Executive and at the International Socialist Congresses.

The first preoccupation of the L.S.I. was to consolidate its position in Europe. Consideration had to be given to the claims for admission put forward by the parties of the old Second International and by those of the Vienna Union. Unity had to be promoted in countries in which there was more than one party and special arrangements had to be made for the countries in which there were parties representing different nations. When new parties were affiliated decisions had to be taken as to their representation at the Congresses and on the Executive, the number of votes to which they would be entitled and the scale of their affiliation fees.

### a. *Representation and Voting Power*

Because of the elaborate arrangements for assessing the power and influence of the affiliated parties the questions of representation and voting power were continually under review. A general re-allocation took place after each Congress, when the representatives of the various parties had to be either replaced or re-appointed. But adjustments were also made when substantial changes took place in the position of the individual parties. A heavy rise or fall in membership, or in votes at a general election, would be followed by a decision of the Executive of the L.S.I. to scale the party's representation and voting power up or down accordingly.

These arrangements, however, were only valid in the case of legally existing parties, which could publish their membership figures and put forward candidates at Parliamentary elections. In the case of underground parties, and of groups in exile, a special allocation had to be made by the Executive in the light of the known circumstances. As the number of illegal parties grew it became increasingly difficult to preserve a just balance. On the one hand, there was a feeling of sympathy towards a party which had been the victim of a dictatorship or a *coup d'état*, but whose representatives could still be regarded as the spokesmen or trustees for their former members. On the other hand, there was the desire to reserve the effective control over the administration and policy of the L.S.I. for the parties which were still



functioning openly and legally, which maintained the L.S.I. by their contributions, and which were primarily responsible for its decisions and actions. During the first few years after a party had been dissolved or driven into exile there was a disposition to allow its former representatives to continue to sit, and to leave its voting powers unchanged. But sooner or later, especially if new leaders or groups emerged, the party's position had to be re-examined. Its affiliation fees were either reduced or cancelled and a formal decision was taken as to whether its voting rights and representation were to be curtailed.

Decisions of this kind were taken for individual countries from time to time. A general re-allocation was made, as usual, after the Vienna Congress of 1931, and as there was no Congress in 1934 a special decision on the matter was taken in that year, while a further revision was made in 1939. These re-allocations shifted the responsibility and power of decision further towards the parties which were functioning in the democratic countries of western and northern Europe. The number of congress votes and of seats on the Executive were considerably reduced. Of 41 parties, 19 remained in 1939 with only one congress vote each and were thus only able to be represented on the Executive in a consultative capacity. Of the 38 members left on the Executive, 29 were representatives of democratic countries.<sup>1</sup>

#### b. *Extra-European Countries*

After the first few years the problem of extending the organisation of the L.S.I. was essentially one of building up contacts with the Labour and Socialist parties outside Europe. A report on this subject was submitted to the Executive of the L.S.I. in July 1929 by the General Secretary, Friedrich Adler, who had been able to discuss the matter with overseas delegates to the International Labour Conferences at Geneva. The difficulties in the way of securing new affiliations from extra-European countries, he said, were partly political and partly financial. To direct propaganda and organisation from Europe would be impossible; the Labour Movements in overseas countries would have to form parties similar to those of the L.S.I. by their own efforts. The financial difficulties were aggravated by the fact that delegates to the L.S.I. gatherings would have long distances to travel. Something should therefore be done to ease the position for parties in countries remote from Europe. Adler also suggested that closer relations with the colonial

<sup>1</sup> *International Information*, 1939, pp. 257, 261.

peoples were necessary and that the proposals made in the Brussels Congress resolution on the colonial problem should be followed up.

Arising out of this report the Executive decided that the affiliation fees from overseas countries (or at least a part of the fees) should be retained in those countries for the purpose of creating a fund to facilitate the sending of delegates to L.S.I. meetings and congresses.<sup>1</sup> The practical effect of this arrangement was that these parties were excused from payment of affiliation fees. Nothing further was decided, however, with regard to the approaches to be made to parties overseas. The concession regarding affiliation fees was applied to the parties already affiliated, but only one new affiliation from outside Europe was secured—in the case of the Socialist Party of Uruguay, which entered the L.S.I. in 1931.<sup>2</sup> No delegations were sent to overseas parties with a view to securing further affiliations and no proposals to this effect were made to them in writing. The policy of the L.S.I. in this matter was to supply the parties with information on the activities of the International and to allow their political outlook to ripen until they themselves took the initiative of applying for affiliation. A survey printed in the reports submitted to the Vienna Congress in 1931 showed that there were a number of non-affiliated Labour and Socialist parties outside Europe, particularly in the British Dominions and Latin America. None of these parties, except the one in Uruguay, had made any approaches to the L.S.I. for affiliation.<sup>3</sup>

### c. *Relations with the Communist International*

A constant preoccupation of the L.S.I. and its affiliated parties was the problem of establishing unity in the Labour Movement. The existence of communist parties alongside labour and socialist parties, and of the Communist International alongside the L.S.I., was a source of weakness and a cause of dissension. It will be remembered that an attempt to heal the breach was made at an early stage by the holding of a joint conference of representatives of the Second International, the Vienna Union and the Communist International in Berlin in 1922, and that it was only after the failure of this conference that the Second International and the Vienna Union decided to go ahead without the Communists and to join forces in the L.S.I.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Fourth Congress of the L.S.I., Vienna, 1931*, p. 107.

<sup>2</sup> *Fourth Congress of the L.S.I., Vienna, 1931*, p. 400.

<sup>3</sup> *Fourth Congress of the L.S.I., Vienna, 1931*, Part V.

<sup>4</sup> See Chapter I, p. 20.

Thus there was a clear opposition between the L.S.I. and the Communist International from the beginning. This, however, did not affect the attitude of the socialists to the workers and peasants in Russia or to the Russian Revolution. A resolution passed by the inaugural congress of the L.S.I. in 1923 declared that it was the duty of the workers to combat the attempts by Imperialist Powers to intervene in the internal affairs of Russia or to cause a fresh civil war there. On the other hand, the resolution supported the Russian Socialists in demanding (1) the cessation of the persecution of socialists in Russia and the release of all who had been imprisoned for propagating their political convictions; and (2) the complete abandonment of the system of terrorist party dictatorship and the adoption of a régime of political freedom and democratic self-government.<sup>1</sup>

But the treatment of the socialists in Russia was not an insuperable obstacle in the way of unity. The difficulties arose through fundamental differences between the Communist International and the L.S.I. The L.S.I. wanted to promote unity, but not at the cost of liberty and democracy. It was not willing to sacrifice the autonomy of its affiliated parties or to abandon democratic methods of discussion and decision. The Communist International likewise called for unity, but laid the emphasis on united action rather than upon unity of organisation. It wanted to retain its own organisation, and to maintain Communist parties in the various countries. Both the Communist International and the Communist parties were to be subject to the control of the Communist Party in Russia itself.

For many years there was no direct contact between the Communist International and the L.S.I. They fought out their differences in the press and on the platform, but there were no joint meetings or discussions until after Hitler's rise to power in 1933. Even then, the L.S.I. had no contact with the leaders of the Communist International in Moscow but only with some of its representatives in Western Europe.

Thus, in the Report to the Second Congress of the L.S.I. in 1925, it was pointed out that the L.S.I. had 'scarcely entered into contact with the Communist International during the previous two years'. The Report to the next Congress in 1928 stated that during the period under review there had been 'no intercourse of any kind with the Communist International and its auxiliary institutions', and this was repeated in the Report to the Fourth Congress in 1931.

A favourite method of the communists was to form auxiliary

<sup>1</sup> *Resolutions of the Labour and Socialist Congress, Hamburg, 1923*, published by the Secretariat of the L.S.I. 1923.

organisations or 'innocents' clubs'. These organisations were started for the promotion of causes which were popular amongst workers at certain periods (such as the relief of political prisoners, the support of the Spanish workers during the Civil War, and so on). Members of Socialist parties, trade unions and other bodies were invited to join, and were thus brought under Communist influence. The Report to the Marseilles Congress in 1925 contained a warning against the International Red Aid and the Workers' International Relief, both of which were auxiliary to the Communist International. Similarly the Report to the Brussels Congress in 1928 contained a warning against the activities of the League Against Imperialism and Colonial Oppression. The Report pointed out that the L.S.I. had had to 'expose the duplicity' of many of these auxiliary institutions which pretended to be 'neutral'. The most disagreeable task which the Communists force upon the Socialist working class, said the Report, is the exposure of their 'united front' swindle, by which was meant their propaganda in favour of a united front and unity of action while insisting on retaining their separate organisations. Further examples of what came to be known as the 'united front manœuvre' were given in the Report to the Vienna Congress in 1931.<sup>1</sup>

When Hitler reached the threshold of power in 1933 the demand for unity became more insistent. Germany indeed was one of the countries in which the effects of the split had been most severely felt. In the early part of 1933 the Berlin *Vorwärts* (the organ of the German Social-Democratic Party) stressed the need for an understanding with the Communist workers in the struggle against the Nazis. Moreover, the Bureau of the L.S.I. published a manifesto on January 19th declaring that the L.S.I. had always been willing to negotiate with the Communist International, with a view to common action. A reply was made by the Executive of the Communist International on March 5th—the day of the general election in Germany—but the L.S.I. complained that this was too late for effective action, and that the Communist International had not expressed any clear willingness to negotiate on an international basis. A meeting of the Executive of the L.S.I. on March 18th and 19th published a resolution on working-class unity, confirming the attitude of the Bureau and pointing out that the Communist International had not given any reply to the main question, that of negotiations between the two Internationals.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Second Congress of the L.S.I., Marseilles, 1925*, p. 100. *Third Congress, Brussels, 1928*, Section II, p. 45. *Fourth Congress, Vienna, 1931*, p. 144.

<sup>2</sup> *International Information, 1933*, pp. 61, 76, 99, 139.

Nothing came of these suggestions and counter-suggestions. The united front manœuvre continued, and there seemed to be no basis on which the two bodies could negotiate. In October 1934, however, some months after the destruction of the workers' organisations in Austria, when the menace of Nazism and Fascism had become even greater, a joint meeting was actually arranged in Brussels. Emile Vandervelde and Friedrich Adler, the President and Secretary of the L.S.I., attended, together with two representatives of the Communist International, Cachin and Thorez, the Communist leaders in France. The meeting, however, led to no positive result.<sup>1</sup>

Further discussions took place at the time of the Italian campaign against Abyssinia in 1937. The need for unity had been repeatedly stressed by both Communists and Socialists as the danger of Fascism and war increased. But still there was no foundation on which negotiations between the L.S.I. and the Communist International could take place. It was, however, decided by the L.S.I. that the President and Secretary of that body might enter into discussions for purposes of information with representatives of other international organisations engaged in the struggle against Fascism and war. In the light of this ruling the President and the Secretary of the L.S.I. had further interchanges with representatives of the Communist International during 1937. The fundamental difference between the two organisations remained, however, and no progress was made either towards unity of policy or towards the formation of a united organisation.<sup>2</sup>

### 3. POLITICAL PRISONERS

In addition to its work in connection with policy and organisation the L.S.I., as already indicated, carried on various special activities, either in collaboration with other organisations or through committees of its own. Its association with the International of Socialist Youth and other international organisations, and the work done by its International Socialist Women's Committee were mentioned in Chapter II. There were, however, two other forms of activity which the L.S.I. pursued consistently—its work on behalf of political prisoners and its financial assistance to organisations in countries governed by dictatorships.

It was in 1926 that the Executive of the L.S.I. opened an

<sup>1</sup> *International Information*, 1934, p. 499.

<sup>2</sup> *International Information*, 1937, p. 263. *International Information*, 1938, p. 50.

international fund to help the labour movement in countries without democracy (the Matteotti Fund). In the following year the Executive decided; on the motion of the British delegation, to set up a Commission of Enquiry into the Conditions of Political Prisoners.<sup>1</sup> The Commission was to consist of twenty members, with a working Committee of five presided over by Louis de Brouckère of Belgium. One of its first proposals was that the L.S.I. should publish an information service, dealing with the treatment of political prisoners and based on material supplied by the affiliated parties. This led to the issue of a supplement to *International Information*, entitled *Communications on the Conditions of Political Prisoners*, which appeared at frequent intervals as long as the L.S.I. continued to function.<sup>2</sup> The commission did not confine itself to investigations but endeavoured to promote action in the various countries in favour of the growing number of political prisoners. During the period before the Brussels Congress in 1928 it was particularly concerned about the terrorism and persecution in Italy, Hungary, Lithuania, and the Balkan States. It pressed for an amnesty for the Socialist political prisoners in Soviet Russia and initiated a campaign for the abolition of the death penalty.

During the period between the Brussels Congress and the Vienna Congress of 1931 the Executive decided, at the suggestion of the commission, to publish a series of pamphlets on the conditions of political prisoners. Pamphlets were produced on the treatment of political prisoners in Italy, Russia and Poland, and a further pamphlet dealt with a political trial in Moscow that was directed against the Russian Social-Democratic Party and the L.S.I.<sup>4</sup> Attention was drawn to conditions in Italy, Russia and Poland through the *Communications on the Conditions of Political Prisoners* and by reports to the Executive. Action was also taken on behalf of political prisoners in Lithuania, Hungary and other countries.<sup>5</sup>

After the Vienna Congress in 1931 the work continued, but as the years went by the list of countries affected grew longer.

<sup>1</sup> *Third Congress of the L.S.I., Brussels, 1928*, Section I, p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Reports of the meetings and the activities of the Commission of Enquiry are given in the issues of the supplement in question.

<sup>3</sup> *Third Congress of the L.S.I., Brussels, 1928*, Section II, p. 27.

<sup>4</sup> *Political Prisoners in Fascist Italy*. Published (in German) by the Verlag J. H. W. Dietz Nachf, Berlin.

*Political Prisoners in Soviet Russia*. Published (in German) by the Verlag J. H. W. Dietz Nachf, Berlin, and (in French) by L'Eglantine, Brussels.

*By Order of Marshal Pilsudski*. Published by the Secretariat of the L.S.I., Zurich.

*The Moscow Trial and the Labour and Socialist International*. Published by the Labour Party, London.

<sup>5</sup> *Fourth Congress of the L.S.I., Vienna, 1931*, p. 36.

What had happened in a handful of countries before 1931 was repeated on a larger scale in Germany, Austria, Spain, Danzig and Czechoslovakia. There was persecution too in the Baltic States and the Balkans. The reports in *Communications on the Conditions of Political Prisoners* continued to make sickening reading. Further pamphlets were brought out, this time on events that were taking place in Germany and Austria.<sup>1</sup>

As a result of the work of this commission, and of the activities of the Secretariat of the L.S.I., which was primarily responsible for the preparation of the *Communications*, the parties in the L.S.I. were able to keep one another informed on these matters. The extent to which their general membership was aware of the seriousness of the problem of political prisoners and refugees varied, however, from country to country. Some countries were more immediately affected by the problem, either because their own democratic institutions were in danger, or because they were giving asylum to large numbers of political refugees, and in such cases more was done as a rule than in countries less closely concerned. Nevertheless, within the Labour and Socialist parties generally the danger was well understood. Unfortunately neither the efforts of these parties, nor those of other bodies, succeeded in arousing the public conscience sufficiently, or in stimulating the Governments to energetic action. It was not realised widely enough, nor clearly enough, in the early stages, that the persecution of political prisoners was not only an evil in itself but a symptom of the growing brutality and lawlessness that were soon to become a menace to peace and civilisation.

#### 4. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Giacomo Matteotti was one of the first victims of Fascism in Italy. Matteotti, Secretary of the Italian Socialist Party, was murdered in June, 1925, after he had spoken in opposition to Mussolini's policy in the Italian Chamber of Deputies. In the same year the Italian trade unions and the Socialist Party were dissolved. The report to the Brussels Congress of 1928 said that the whole period from 1925 onwards had 'witnessed without intermission a series of acts of violence by reaction, and

<sup>1</sup> *The First Three Months of Hitler's Tyranny—Swastika Terror in Brunswick*. Published by the L.S.I., Zurich, 1933.

*The Black Book of the Austrian Dictatorship—Law and Justice under Dr. Schuschnigg*. Published by L'Eglantine, Brussels, 1934.

There was also a *Second Black Book* entitled *The Austrian Dictatorship at Work—Destruction of Legal Security*, published by The Labour Publications Department, London, 1935.

its repeated attempts to injure the labour movement by all possible means and bring it to the ground'. Every meeting of the Executive and Bureau had had before it fresh problems of the kind, and the Secretariat had had to apply its main effort to the tasks thus created.<sup>1</sup>

The decision to open the Matteotti Fund, as a means of helping the labour movement in countries without democracy, was taken by the Executive of the L.S.I. in April 1926. A permanent memorial to Matteotti was also decided upon, and this took the form of a monument, which was unveiled in the Maison du Peuple at Brussels on September 11th, 1927, by Arthur Henderson, the President of the L.S.I.<sup>2</sup> The Fund had an unfortunate start. The first collections were due to be taken on the second anniversary of Matteotti's death in June, but they had to be postponed because of the National Strike in Great Britain. Workers' organisations in other countries raised funds for the British unions during the strike and for the support of the miners during the long lock-out that followed. Contributions to the Matteotti Fund were eventually started, though not on a uniform basis. The greatest amounts contributed during the period down to the Congress of 1928 came from the Social-Democratic Parties of Holland and Sweden. It had been suggested that the parties should aim to raise for the Fund an amount equivalent to 10 per cent of their annual affiliation fees, but few parties succeeded in reaching this target. In April 1927, after the Fund had been open for a year, a committee was set up to administer its affairs and to stimulate the flow of contributions. The committee issued appeals and also prepared a Matteotti Card for sale in the various countries on May Day of 1928.

From the beginning it was made clear that all monies raised for the Fund would be used exclusively for assisting the labour movement in the countries without democracy. All the administrative and other costs were charged to the account of the L.S.I., so that every donation to the Fund was a direct contribution to the work of assistance and relief.<sup>3</sup>

After the Brussels Congress the calls upon the Fund became heavier and fresh efforts were made to increase its resources. For two years the Fund continued to be administered by the L.S.I. alone, but in 1930 it became a joint institution of the L.S.I. and the I.F.T.U.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Third Congress of the L.S.I., Brussels, 1928, Section I, p. 15.*

<sup>2</sup> *Third Congress of the L.S.I., Brussels, 1928, Section I, p. 22.*

<sup>3</sup> *Third Congress of the L.S.I., Brussels, 1928, Section II, p. 70.*

<sup>4</sup> *Fourth Congress of the L.S.I., Vienna, 1931, p. 162.*



The Stockholm Congress of the I.F.T.U. in 1930 recommended the I.F.T.U. and the national centres to support the Matteotti Fund in order to help the victims of reaction and dictatorship. Shortly after the Congress the Executive of the I.F.T.U. agreed to share in the administration of the Fund. A joint committee was therefore formed by the L.S.I. and the I.F.T.U. to administer the Fund and a joint appeal for support was sent out to the affiliated parties and trade unions. The first substantial grants from the joint fund were made to the labour movement in Poland—mainly to assist the trade unions in maintaining their organisations—but in 1933 and 1934 assistance on an even larger scale had to be provided for the labour movements in Germany and Austria. The help to the German labour movement consisted in the main of financial and other support given to the refugees, while in the case of Austria it was also found necessary to provide legal assistance for the political prisoners and relief for the families of those killed, wounded and imprisoned during and after the fighting.<sup>1</sup>

By the end of 1934 help to the victims of Fascism had become so pressing that still greater efforts were called for. It was therefore decided that the Fund should in future be known as the International Solidarity Fund, and a further joint appeal was issued at the beginning of 1935.<sup>2</sup> The funds raised in response to these appeals came very largely from the trade unions, who were usually in a better position to contribute than the Socialist parties. Then, in 1936, the civil war broke out in Spain. Immediate steps were taken to provide help of various kinds for the Spanish Socialists and trade unionists. In addition to their political campaign in support of their Spanish comrades<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1930-32*. I.F.T.U., Paris, 1934, pp. 23, 103.

*Fourth Congress of the L.S.I., Vienna, 1931*, p. 162.

*Report of the 63rd Annual Trades Union Congress, Bristol, 1931*. Polish Trade Unions Appeal Fund, pp. 52 and 57.

*Report of 65th Annual Trades Union Congress, Brighton, 1933*. Help for the Workers of Germany—Joint Appeal of I.F.T.U. and L.S.I. through Matteotti Fund, p. 173.

*Report of 66th Annual Trades Union Congress, Weymouth, 1934*. Help for the Workers of Germany—Joint Appeal of I.F.T.U. and L.S.I., through Matteotti Fund, pp. 55 and 60. Help for the Workers of Austria Fund, pp. 55, 58, 82, 254.

*Report of 67th Annual Trades Union Congress, Margate, 1935*. Help for the Workers of Austria Fund, pp. 57 and 62. Help for the Workers of Germany—Joint Appeal of I.F.T.U. and L.S.I. through Matteotti Fund, pp. 58 and 62.

<sup>2</sup> *I.F.T.U. Triennial Report, 1933-35*. Congress, London, 1935, I.F.T.U., Paris, 1937, pp. 131, 217. *Report of the 68th Annual Trades Union Congress, Plymouth, 1936*. International Solidarity Fund, pp. 58 and 62.

*Report of 36th Annual Conference of the Labour Party, Edinburgh, 1936*, International Solidarity Fund—co-operation with T.U.C. in helping refugees from Germany and Austria, p. 32. Help for Spain—issue of appeal by National Council of Labour, p. 32.

<sup>3</sup> See below, p. 111.

the I.F.T.U. and the L.S.I. organised relief activities on a considerable scale. Large quantities of food, clothing and medical supplies were sent to Spain by sea and overland. Some of the stores were carried through France by convoys of lorries which were left in Spain for the use of the workers' organisations. Ambulances were provided. An up-to-date military hospital, with hundreds of beds, was opened at Ontoniente and maintained by grants from the International Solidarity Fund. Thousands of women and children were evacuated to other countries.<sup>1</sup>

Finally in 1937 the I.F.T.U. issued an appeal to all national trade union centres to arouse public opinion against the renewed Japanese attacks against China. A boycott of Japanese goods was proclaimed and funds raised for the relief of the working-class population in the towns most heavily bombarded by the Japanese. At the Zurich Congress in 1939 a resolution was passed declaring that the Chinese people and workers had a right not only to the sympathy, but also to the effective support, of the workers of the world.<sup>2</sup>

#### WORK OF THE INTERNATIONAL OF SOCIALIST YOUTH

The work of the International of Socialist Youth is auxiliary to that of the L.S.I. and, to a certain extent, to that of the I.F.T.U. Like them it concerns itself very largely with the formulation of policy; like them it has its problems of organisa-

<sup>1</sup> *The International Trade Union Movement*, I.F.T.U., Paris, Vol. XVII, Nos. 1-7, January-July, 1937, p. 5.

*The International Trade Union Movement*, I.F.T.U., Paris, Vol. XVIII, Nos. 3-5, March-May 1938, p. 17.

*Report of the 36th Annual Conference of the Labour Party, Edinburgh, 1936*. International Solidarity Fund—co-operation with T.U.C. in helping refugees from Germany and Austria, p. 32. Help for Spain—issue of appeal by National Council of Labour, p. 32.

*Report of 69th Annual Trades Union Congress, Norwich, 1937*. International Solidarity Fund, pp. 56 and 60. Spanish Workers Appeal, p. 60.

*Report of 70th Annual Trades Union Congress, Blackpool, 1938*. International Solidarity Fund, pp. 60 and 64.

*Report of 71st Annual Trades Union Congress, Bridlington, 1939*. International Solidarity Fund, pp. 60, 64. Work of Relief for Spain, p. 214.

*Report of 38th Annual Conference of the Labour Party, Southport, 1939*. International Solidarity Fund, p. 6. List of consignments to Spain, p. 7. International Hospital, p. 8. Help for the Children, p. 9.

*Report of the 72nd Annual Trades Union Congress, Southport, 1940*. International Solidarity Fund, pp. 62 and 66.

*Report of the 73rd Annual Trades Union Congress, Edinburgh, 1941*. International Solidarity Fund, pp. 62 and 66.

<sup>2</sup> *The International Trade Union Movement*, I.F.T.U., Paris, Vol. XVIII, Nos. 3-5, March-May 1938, p. 21.

*The International Trade Union Movement*, I.F.T.U., Paris, Vol. XIX, Nos. 6-7, June-July, 1939, p. 212.

tion. It also carries on various special activities of particular interest to young people.

### I. FORMULATION OF POLICY

Policy was decided at the International Socialist Youth Congresses held in Hamburg (1923), Amsterdam (1926), Vienna (1929), Prague (1932), Copenhagen (1935), and Lille (1939), and at the meetings of the Executive and Bureau which took place during the intervals between the Congresses. Since the main object of the International of Socialist Youth is to support the Labour and Socialist Parties in the various countries, and to prepare young people for membership of them, it has been concerned in the main with the same great questions of international policy as the L.S.I. and the I.F.T.U. Its political decisions were inspired by a desire to unite young Socialists with the 'adult' parties in a common international struggle. The attendance of representatives of the International of Socialist Youth at Congresses of the L.S.I. and the I.F.T.U. and at joint conferences of the two bodies; the appearance of delegates from the L.S.I. and the I.F.T.U. at International Socialist Youth Congresses and at meetings of the Executive; the representation of the International of Socialist Youth on the Executive of the L.S.I., and at meetings of the International Trade Union Committee for Youth and Educational Questions; ensured close co-operation and an excellent understanding.

Accordingly the International of Socialist Youth was fully informed as to the policy of the L.S.I. and the I.F.T.U. on broad issues of international concern—such as disarmament, war and militarism; reaction and Fascism; the world economic crisis and unemployment; and the work of the League of Nations and the I.L.O. It was therefore able to adapt its decisions on these matters to the special needs of youth and to rally the young Socialists to the support of the wider movement. Like the L.S.I., the International of Socialist Youth is primarily a political organisation but it is also concerned, of course, with the economic well-being of young workers. It could not overlook the effects of unemployment on the youth of the various countries, nor the need for international measures for the protection of young workers, the more so as there is no Youth International in the trade union field. The International Trade Union Committee for Youth and Educational Questions, which dealt with the problems of young workers on the industrial side, was preceded by a Committee for the Protection of Young Workers formed by the young Socialists in 1922. Although this committee was taken

over by the I.F.T.U., the International of Socialist Youth maintained its interest in the problems with which it dealt and was brought into consultation by the I.F.T.U. from time to time, when questions of policy were under consideration.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. ORGANISATION

The problems of organisation encountered by the International of Socialist Youth were similar to those of the L.S.I.—consolidation of the organisation in Europe, extension of the International to overseas countries; contacts with youth organisations driven underground, relations with the young Communists. Although the International of Socialist Youth was joined by practically all the young Socialist federations of any consequence in Europe it was even less successful than the L.S.I. in securing affiliations from countries overseas. This was not merely due to financial and geographical difficulties; actually there were very few eligible organisations in existence outside Europe. At the outbreak of war the only overseas organisations attached to the International were the young Socialists of the United States, and the overseas sections of the 'Poale Zion' International Federation of Jewish Socialist Youth Organisations. It was known that organisations of young Socialists had come into being in some of the South American republics. These, however, were small and only one of them—in Argentina—was brought into affiliation with the International of Socialist Youth. Some years before the war the Argentine federation dropped out of the International, and thereafter contact with the Socialist Youth organisations in Latin America was of the slightest.

Every effort was made to maintain contacts with the organisations of young Socialists that were driven underground in one country after another in Europe. From 1923 till Hitler's rise to power in 1933 the Secretariat of the International of Socialist Youth was in Berlin, and from 1933 to 1938 in Prague. The Secretary of the International, Erich Ollenhauer, was also the President of the Socialist youth organisation in Germany and in 1933 he became a member of the Executive of the German Social-Democratic Party. When the Party Headquarters were removed to Prague in 1933 he was able to combine his party work with his youth activities and to maintain contact with the young Socialists of Germany through the clandestine organisations built up by the Party Executive. Links were also established with the underground Austrian Socialist youth movement after

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter II, p. 67.

the events of 1934. From 1926 to 1932 the President of the International of Socialist Youth had been an Austrian, Karl Heinz, and Austria continued to be represented in the International till the outbreak of war. In fact, an Austrian representative, Ernst Papanek, at the time an exile in Paris, was re-elected to the small Bureau of the International at the last International Socialist Youth Congress in August 1939. From the time of the partition of Czechoslovakia in 1938 till the middle of 1940 the headquarters of the International were in Paris, which had then become the centre of activity for those who were endeavouring to maintain communications with the Socialists, trade unionists and young Socialists of the countries governed by dictatorships.

Relations with the young Communists presented the International of Socialist Youth with a very serious problem, especially after the formation of the Popular Front Government in France and the outbreak of the civil war in Spain. Although earlier negotiations for unity with the Communists had never led to any positive results, nationally or internationally, either in the political or in the trade union field, the young people were particularly susceptible to propaganda for a united front of resistance to Fascism. The arguments in favour of entering into an organised relationship with the Communists were the same as in the case of the L.S.I. But the example of the Popular Front Government in France—even though the Communists retained their freedom of action by refusing to accept office in it—and the spectacle of Socialists, trade unionists, Communists, Anarchists and Republicans of all shades fighting side by side against the common enemy in Spain had a special appeal to the idealism and enthusiasm of youth. The problem was one that each country had to settle for itself. An agreement with the Young Communist International would have been as surprising as an agreement between the L.S.I. and the Comintern. The matter was discussed on more than one occasion, but though the arguments for a United Front were strongly advocated the majority felt that on this question the International of Socialist Youth could do no other than follow the line of the L.S.I. In some countries joint action with the young Communists in the struggle against Fascism was in fact undertaken, though the young Socialists retained their independent organisation. Matters were taken a stage further in Spain, however, where the Socialist and Communist Youth organisations amalgamated to form the United Socialist Youth. This meant that the leadership of the Spanish Youth organisation fell into the hands of the young Communists, who were bound not by the decisions of the

International of Socialist Youth, but by those of the Young Communist International in Moscow. Such a position was unacceptable to the young Socialist organisations of other countries and, as already stated,<sup>1</sup> the Spanish organisation was expelled from the International at the Lille Congress in August 1939.

### 3. PROTECTION OF YOUNG WORKERS

Among the special activities of the International of Socialist Youth are the promotion of the economic interests of young workers and the encouragement of educational and cultural work. Although the protection of young workers in the industrial sphere is primarily a matter for the trade unions, the International of Socialist Youth has been able to make its own contribution to the struggle from time to time. Thus a programme on the reform of the apprenticeship system and on education in continuation schools was drawn up in 1922 by the Committee for the Protection of Young Workers, set up by the two young Socialist Internationals which were in existence before the foundation of the International of Socialist Youth in its present form. The I.F.T.U., which had already published a pamphlet on the *Protection of Young Workers* earlier in the year, was represented at the meeting and accepted an invitation to 'father' the Committee's work.<sup>2</sup> In 1926, when the I.F.T.U. set up its own advisory committee (later the International Trade Union Committee for Youth and Educational Questions) it was agreed that while the I.F.T.U. would deal with social legislation for young workers and the general improvement of their economic position, the Youth International would undertake the purely educational work.

Subsequent discussions between the I.F.T.U., the L.S.I., and the Youth International led to agreement on a draft programme for the protection of working-class youth,<sup>3</sup> which was used by the International Trade Union Committee for Youth and Educational Questions as the basis for the fuller programme drawn up at its meeting in 1928.<sup>4</sup> The International of Socialist Youth was represented at this meeting by a fraternal delegate. It was also represented, with other bodies, at a meeting held in 1929, at which it was decided to bring out an entirely new edition of the I.F.T.U. pamphlet on *The Protection of Young Workers*.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter II, p. 50.

<sup>2</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1922-24*. I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1924, p. 111.

<sup>3</sup> *Report on Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1924-26*. I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1927, p. 128.

<sup>4</sup> See Chapter II, p. 67.

<sup>5</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1927-30*. I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1931, p. 98.

The proposals contained in these documents were pressed forward in the various countries and they also constituted a guide for the workers' delegates to meetings and conferences of the I.L.O.

In 1935 the International of Socialist Youth made a direct approach to the I.L.O. itself. During the world economic crisis the economic needs of young workers called for special attention. Large numbers of young people were unemployed for years. Some had never worked at all. The 1935 Session of the International Labour Conference had before it a recommendation concerning the protection of unemployed youth. Lists of signatures in support of the recommendation were collected by the Socialist youth organisations and other bodies in the various countries. The I.F.T.U. recommended its national centres to support these representations, and assistance was also given by the Workers' Group of the I.L.O. A delegation from the youth organisations presented the petitions to the Conference. Speakers from the International of Socialist Youth and the I.F.T.U. urged the Conference to shorten the procedure for the adoption of the recommendation, with the result that it was adopted after a single discussion as a matter of urgency by 96 votes to 17.<sup>1</sup>

#### 4. EDUCATIONAL WORK

The educational and social activities of the International of Socialist Youth were second only in importance to its work of formulating political policy. International summer schools and holiday tours were organised so that young Socialists of different countries might get to know one another and join in the study of international problems. A correspondence bureau was run for the purpose of enabling young Socialists to exchange letters with friends in other countries. International material on the Socialist Youth movement was distributed for use at lectures (including lantern lectures).<sup>2</sup> An International Youth Day was organised by the Socialist Youth federations on the first Sunday in October and wherever possible the organisations of neighbouring countries exchanged speakers so that the international significance of the youth day celebrations might be demonstrated. On three occasions—at Amsterdam in 1926, Vienna 1929 and Liège 1934—an International Socialist Youth Rally was held. These rallies were in addition to the International Socialist

<sup>1</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1933-35.* I.F.T.U., Paris, 1936, p. 65. *International Labour Conference, Geneva, 1935.* Record of Proceedings, I.L.O., Geneva, 1935, p. 827.

<sup>2</sup> This was before the days of workers' films. See Chapter II, p. 70.

Youth Congresses, and they brought together large numbers of young Socialists for meetings, sports events, concerts and other social gatherings. Occasionally international conferences of youth leaders were held, not to pass resolutions and determine policy, but to exchange views and clarify ideas on international problems. In addition to its links with the L.S.I., the I.F.T.U. and the Socialist Educational International,<sup>1</sup> the International of Socialist Youth also exchanged representatives with the Socialist Workers' Sport International.

Actually, the International of Socialist Youth was as much an educational as a political organisation—not merely because it organised summer schools, lectures and the like, but because it helped young people to acquire experience and to exercise responsibility. It not only strove to make them politically conscious but it aimed at helping them to learn the way of life. It was not concerned with economic and political solutions alone, but with widening the outlook of young people and improving the quality of their lives. The political and social education of the young Socialists was not expected to end when they left the youth organisations for the Labour and Socialist parties. Their work in the youth organisations was regarded as a preparation for wider and heavier tasks.

Many of the young Socialists who received their early training in the youth organisations played a prominent part in later life in the Labour and Socialist parties. An outstanding example is provided by Sweden, where the Socialist Youth organisation before the war had over 100,000 members. The leaders of the Social-Democratic Party in Sweden, including the Prime Minister, Per Albin Hansson, were prominent in the Party's Youth organisation at the beginning of the present century. A number of the leading figures of the International of Socialist Youth during the period between the two wars may also be instanced. Karl Heinz, the President of the International from 1926 to 1932, became Secretary of the Austrian Schutzbund and a member of the Austrian Parliament. Koos Vorrink, President from 1932 to 1935, was elected to Parliament and became Chairman of the Social-Democratic Party of the Netherlands. H. C. Hansen, President from 1935 to 1939, was a Member of Parliament and Secretary of the Danish Social-Democratic Party. Torsten Nilsson, the present President, is a Member of Parliament and Secretary of the Social-Democratic Party in Sweden. The President of the Danish Social-Democratic Party at the outbreak of war, Hans Hedtoft-Hansen, was a Member of Parliament who sat in the Bureau of the International till 1932.

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter II, p. 67.



Finn Moe, a member of the Executive of the International, became foreign editor of the Norwegian Labour Party's daily newspaper. Max Westphal, Chairman of the Socialist Youth Organisation in Germany and member of the Executive of the Socialist Youth International from 1921 to 1928, was member and secretary of the German Social-Democratic Party Executive from 1928 till the Party's dissolution by the Nazis in 1933.

#### JOINT WORK OF THE L.S.I. AND THE I.F.T.U.

Contact between the I.F.T.U. and the L.S.I. has been maintained from the beginning. The I.F.T.U., which was restarted in 1919, was represented by its Secretary, Jan Oudegeest, at the Foundation Congress of the L.S.I. at Hamburg in 1923. It was understood that the I.F.T.U. should occupy itself primarily with industrial matters and the L.S.I. with political questions, but it was impossible to maintain any hard-and-fast division.<sup>1</sup> Joint meetings were therefore held from time to time to consider matters of common concern. During the decade from the onset of the world economic crisis till the outbreak of war in 1939 the meetings became more frequent.

#### I. BEFORE HITLER

One of the resolutions carried by the L.S.I. at its first Congress was in support of the policy of the I.F.T.U. in regard to the eight-hour day and international social reform legislation. The constitution of the L.S.I., adopted at the same Congress, declared that the L.S.I. considered the unity of the trade union movement, as represented by the I.F.T.U., to be absolutely essential for realising the emancipation of the working class, and that the L.S.I. would therefore maintain a close connection with the I.F.T.U.<sup>2</sup> At the next Congress of the I.F.T.U. at Vienna in 1924 the L.S.I. was represented by its secretary, Dr. Friedrich Adler, who reciprocated the good wishes extended by Oudegeest at Hamburg. The report to the Vienna Congress expressed the 'satisfaction' of the I.F.T.U. at the results of the Hamburg Congress, while the report presented to the second Congress of the L.S.I. in 1925 spoke of the 'friendly relations' between the L.S.I. and the I.F.T.U. and the 'close collaboration' between them.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter IV, p. 119.

<sup>2</sup> *Resolutions of the Labour and Socialist Congress, Hamburg, 1923*, published by the Secretariat of the Labour and Socialist International, 1923.

<sup>3</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1922-24*. I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1924, pp. 99, 221. *Second Congress of the L.S.I., Marseilles, 1925*, p. 97.

It was in October 1923, five months after the Hamburg Congress, that the first consultation between the two Internationals took place. The occasion was a joint meeting of the Bureaux of the L.S.I. and the I.F.T.U. to discuss the situation in the Ruhr, and the meeting passed a unanimous resolution containing proposals for 'a just and effective solution of the problem of Reparations'. In the following year discussions were started with a view to arranging for regular co-operation between the two organisations.<sup>1</sup>

At its meeting in Luxemburg in February 1924 the Executive of the L.S.I. decided to appoint C. T. Cramp and Dr. Friedrich Adler to carry out preliminary negotiations with the I.F.T.U. On March 1st these two representatives met representatives of the I.F.T.U. and agreed to form a joint committee, consisting of Cramp and Adler for the L.S.I. and Léon Jouhaux and Jan Oudegeest for the I.F.T.U. A meeting of this committee in April was followed by joint meetings of the Bureaux of the two Internationals. The first of these, held in July 1924, considered the problem of reparations. Two were held in 1925. At one of these attention was given to the eight-hour day, night work in bakeries and the Geneva Protocol. At the other there was a discussion on the resolutions of the Marseilles Congress of the L.S.I. in 1925 concerning the eight-hour day and unemployment. A resolution was also adopted on the struggle against reaction.

A third joint meeting was held in May 1926 to discuss the miners' dispute in Great Britain. Preparations were also made at this meeting for a World Migration Congress, which was held in London in June 1926, under the auspices of the two Internationals.<sup>2</sup> Two further joint meetings were held before the next Congress of the I.F.T.U. in 1927 to deal with the situation in Italy, the programme of the International Economic Conference which was to be held in 1927 in Geneva, the danger of war in the Balkans and the situation in China.

Referring to this first series of meetings the report to the 1927 Congress of the I.F.T.U. asserted that the 'friendly co-operation' between the two Internationals was 'everything that could be desired', while the report to the Brussels Congress of the L.S.I. in the following year declared that the community of interests of the two bodies had 'consistently been recognised as an obvious fact'.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1922-24*. I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1924, p. 102. *Second Congress of the L.S.I., Marseilles, 1925*, pp. 21, 27, 97.

<sup>2</sup> *World Migration and Labour*. I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1926.

<sup>3</sup> *I.F.T.U. Report on Activities 1924-26*. I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1927, pp. 117, 136. *Second Congress of the L.S.I., Marseilles, 1925*, pp. 80, 97. *Third Congress of the L.S.I., Brussels, 1928*. Section II, p. 43.

An idea of what this community of interest meant was given by Friedrich Adler in his address to the Paris Congress of the I.F.T.U. in 1927, when he pointed out that both the political and the trade union organisations were recruited from the same working class and that the I.F.T.U. and the L.S.I. were, therefore, linked in a common destiny. Despite this close connection Socialists were convinced that the trade unions could accomplish their daily work and their great mission in the future by working under conditions of complete independence and autonomy at self-appointed tasks. Socialists believed that they, for their part, could best carry out their duty by serving the trade union struggle as good trade unionists. Thus the relationship between the two organisations should be 'the utmost degree of freedom and independence in tactics and organisation, combined with the most intimate connection as regards their mission and role'.<sup>1</sup>

A further joint meeting was held in Cologne in July 1928 to consider problems of the Italian Labour movement, but after that there was a gap until March 1930, when the two organisations came together again to go into the problem of disarmament.<sup>2</sup> In the report to the Stockholm Congress of the I.F.T.U. in 1930 it was explained that during the first years of its existence the I.F.T.U. had waged a ceaseless campaign against war and militarism, although this was primarily a political matter. It had been compelled to do so because the Socialist movement was at that time disunited, but since the formation of the L.S.I. this important task had naturally fallen to that body.<sup>3</sup>

In a resolution on disarmament and peace the Congress called for the immediate limitation and reduction of armaments, the convening of the general disarmament conference at the earliest possible date, the conclusion of a first convention to stop the armaments race, the supervision of the manufacture of war material and of the trade in arms, the extension of compulsory arbitration in international disputes and the promotion of economic co-operation among the peoples.<sup>4</sup> It was in January 1931 that the Executive of the I.F.T.U. decided to suggest that the I.F.T.U. and the L.S.I. should take joint action in the matter, with the result that the Joint Disarmament Commission

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings of the Fourth Congress of I.F.T.U., 1927.* I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1927, p. 39. *Third Congress of the L.S.I., Brussels, 1928.* Section II, p. 43.

<sup>2</sup> *Third Congress of the L.S.I., Brussels, 1928.* Section II, p. 43. See also above, p. 78.

<sup>3</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1927-30, Congress, Stockholm, 1930.* I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1931, p. 75.

<sup>4</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1927-30, Congress, Stockholm, 1930.* I.F.T.U. Amsterdam, 1931, pp. 300, 320, 360, 391.

of the two Internationals was formed to work out a common policy and programme of action.<sup>1</sup>

It was during the period from 1931 onwards that the collaboration between the two organisations was most intense. Disarmament was one of the subjects that came in for a good deal of attention. The world economic crisis was another. A joint effort was also made to build up the International Solidarity Fund,<sup>2</sup> and towards the end of the period there were numerous joint meetings to deal with current international problems.

## 2. DISARMAMENT

The Joint Disarmament Commission of the L.S.I. and the I.F.T.U. held various meetings in the first half of 1931. By the time of the Vienna Congress of the L.S.I. in July 1931 it had drafted a set of demands to be presented to the Disarmament Conference and a programme of action, both of which were adopted by the Congress and by the I.F.T.U. In their statement of demands the two internationals reaffirmed that all the material and moral forces of Labour were at the service of peace. The Labour Movement, they said, had always endeavoured to promote economic and political co-operation among the peoples. It had fought for the development of international arbitration, international justice and all forms of pacific settlement of international disputes. But the I.F.T.U. and the L.S.I. had never lost sight of the fact that disarmament was an indispensable condition of this new world of peace, and that without it all the rest was vain.

In view of the forthcoming meeting of the Disarmament Conference the two Internationals declared (1) that the system of disarmament would only be complete and durable if it were based on equality of rights and duties; (2) that equality should not be obtained by the rearmament of the disarmed countries, that no form of armaments should be increased by the disarmament treaty, but that there should be a substantial, immediate and general reduction; (3) that this reduction should extend to all forms of armaments, that the prohibition of chemical and bacteriological munitions should be made effective, that national air forces should be abolished, that civil aeroplane construction should be strictly controlled and that airways should be internationalised; (4) that there should be a system of strict international control of expenditure, armaments, the public and

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 79.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 92

private manufacture of munitions and the international trade in arms, independently of the national control in the various countries, 'which democracy alone makes possible', and (5) that a permanent international disarmament conference should be set up to continue the work of disarmament until all preparations for war had ceased throughout the whole world.<sup>1</sup>

Provision was made in the programme of action for disarmament demonstrations, action in the various parliaments, international public meetings in the most important European cities, a petition campaign in favour of disarmament, a special international conference of the I.F.T.U. and the L.S.I., an international press conference, propaganda literature, the appointment of an observer to attend the Disarmament Conference, and the publication of reports on the campaign.<sup>2</sup>

Special attention was paid to the petition campaign, and a large number of petitions from many countries were presented to the Disarmament Conference at Geneva in February 1932 by representatives of the L.S.I. and the I.F.T.U.<sup>3</sup> The proposed joint disarmament conference of the L.S.I. and the I.F.T.U. was held at Zurich in May 1932. It was attended by the members of the I.F.T.U. Executive, the International Trade Union Committee for Youth and Educational Questions, the International Committee of Trade Union Women, thirty-two representatives of twelve national centres and twenty-three representatives of twelve International Trade Secretariats; and by the L.S.I. Executive, sixty representatives of the Socialist parties of twenty-two countries, the members of the International Socialist Women's Committee, the Executive of the Socialist Youth International and representatives of the Socialist Educational International.

By this time the Disarmament Conference had been in session for over three months. A resolution passed by the joint conference complained that the slow progress in the deliberations at Geneva was profoundly disappointing the peoples. The conference confirmed the demands formulated at the Vienna Congress by the L.S.I. in agreement with the I.F.T.U., and declared itself in favour of the abolition of offensive armaments as a first step towards equality of rights and duties; the internationalisation of civil aviation, strict control of aircraft construction and the limitation of expenditure on armaments; a substantial reduction

<sup>1</sup> *Fourth Congress of the L.S.I., Vienna, 1931*, pp. 78, 80, 140, 889. *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1930-32*, I.F.T.U., Paris, 1934, p. 80.

<sup>2</sup> *Fourth Congress of the L.S.I., Vienna, 1931*, pp. 81, 892.

<sup>3</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1930-32*. I.F.T.U., Paris, 1934, p. 84. See also the official reports of the Disarmament Conference and the issues of *Disarmament*, published by the Secretariat of the L.S.I.

in the remaining categories of arms; and the most rigorous international control of disarmament.

At the same time the conference pointed out that the Great Powers had not taken the action open to them to guarantee peace and respect for international treaties in the Far East. The Japanese attack in Manchuria was then well under way, and the conference declared that if the Great Powers failed to prevent Japan from continuing her campaign of plunder in China they would have no right to make the absence of security in the Far East a pretext for the sabotage of disarmament. The conference also saw clearly that the chances of disarmament were threatened by the growth of Fascism. One of the essential obstacles to international understanding and to effective and controlled disarmament, they said, was the existence of Fascist or semi-Fascist governments.

Reference was also made to the economic and political aspects of disarmament. The re-establishment of international confidence, said the conference, was quite impossible without an agreed solution of the problem of inter-State debts, the termination of the growing excesses of protectionism, a guarantee of peace in the Far East against Japanese imperialism, and the restoration of confidence in the stability of peace by a serious advance towards international disarmament.

Finally the conference called for the complete suppression of the private manufacture of arms and a strict international control both of public and private manufacture of war material and of the international trade in arms.<sup>1</sup>

Further meetings of the Joint Disarmament Commission of the L.S.I. and the I.F.T.U. were held in 1933, but by that time it was becoming increasingly clear that the Disarmament Conference at Geneva would end in failure. When the Commission began to meet again in 1935 it became known as the Joint Anti-War Committee of the L.S.I. and the I.F.T.U. The occasion for the resumption of its meetings was the Italian attack upon Abyssinia, and whereas its sole concern had previously been with disarmament it now turned to a consideration of how to enforce peace by the imposition of sanctions.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1930-32.* I.F.T.U., Paris, 1934, p. 84. *World Labour and Disarmament*, Report of the Joint Disarmament Conference of the L.S.I. and the I.F.T.U., L.S.I. Pamphlets No. 3. Zurich 1932.

<sup>2</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1930-32.* I.F.T.U., Paris, 1934, p. 89. *I.F.T.U., Triennial Report 1933-35. Congress, London, 1936*, I.F.T.U., Paris, 1937, pp. 106, 192. *International Information*, 1932, p. 232.

### 3. WORLD ECONOMIC CRISIS

During this same period from 1930 onwards the two Internationals collaborated in devising solutions for the problems created by the world economic crisis. In October 1930 the Executive of the I.F.T.U. agreed to a suggestion by the Executive of the L.S.I. that a joint committee should be appointed to investigate the problems of the world economic crisis and unemployment. The members appointed were Walter M. Citrine (Great Britain), H. Jacobson (Denmark), Léon Jouhaux (France), Theodor Leipart (Germany), and Walter Schevenels (General Secretary) for the I.F.T.U.; and for the L.S.I., Otto Bauer (Austria), Louis de Brouckère (Belgium), Joseph Compton (Great Britain), Robert Grimm (Switzerland) and Fritz Naphtali (Germany).

The joint committee and its sub-committees held several meetings, and by January 1931 it had worked out a comprehensive set of proposals on wage policy, the reduction of hours of work, the organisation of the labour market, holidays with pay, the school leaving age, public works, unemployment insurance, rationalisation, cartels and monopolies, the connection between the industrial and agricultural crisis, tariff policy, protection, dumping, gold and credit, and the political aspects of the unemployment crisis.<sup>1</sup>

On wage policy the joint committee opposed wage reductions as a remedy for the crisis and emphasised the need for an increase in purchasing power. The maintenance of real wages in advanced countries and the improvement of living conditions in countries with low wages were described as absolutely indispensable. Another 'fundamental demand' was for a further reduction of working hours.

Proposals for the organisation of the labour market included the systematic placing of workers through the trade unions, or through official bodies on which the unions and employers were equally represented, frequent enquiries into the extent of unemployment, the absorption of redundant workers into other occupations, vocational guidance and agreements for regulating the labour market internationally.

Holidays with pay were recommended not only as a right with a clear social value, but also as a means of bringing some of the permanent reserve of unemployed back into productive work. The raising of the school leaving age was advocated primarily on educational grounds, but it was pointed out that an incidental

<sup>1</sup> *Fourth Congress of the L.S.I., Vienna, 1931, p. 44. The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1930-32. I.F.T.U., Paris, 1934, p. 105.*

consequence would be the withdrawal of juveniles from the labour market.

Public works constituted another of the suggested remedies. Instead of a reduction the committee recommended the greatest possible increase in public expenditure for productive work in times of economic crisis. There was need, they said, for a systematic policy of investment to concentrate public works upon periods of great unemployment. In every country there should be a long-term investment programme, and later it should be possible to make use of public works on an international scale. In the absence of work there should be suitable and adequate unemployment benefits.

Rationalisation, said the committee, usually led to a displacement of workers, and during recent years this had aggravated the problem of unemployment. The working class, however, desired to transform rationalisation from a source of unemployment and overwork into a source of well-being. The international labour movement therefore urged that machinery be provided for the consultation of trade unions on proposed changes in the methods or conditions of employment, or in the distribution of labour.

During recent years the elimination of free competition and the substitution of industrial concentration through cartels and trusts had been accelerated, with the result that such organisations dominated important markets and were a vital factor in determining the quantity and distribution of goods produced and in fixing prices. The committee therefore recommended that monopolistic concerns should be supervised and regulated by public institutions on which the trade unions and the co-operative movement should be represented.

There was a connection, the committee pointed out, between the industrial crisis and the crisis in agriculture. The purchasing power both of the rural population and of consumers in general was being reduced. The organisation of the sale of agricultural produce should be improved by the establishment of agricultural co-operatives. High tariffs for agricultural products were not a sound means of helping agriculture. On the other hand, agriculture could be effectively protected by the creation of State commercial monopolies, especially in cereals.

Since 1918 protection had been considerably extended. New States were preventing, by means of protective tariffs, the exchange of commodities with regions with which they were formerly united politically and economically. These protectionist tendencies had been still further increased by the world economic crisis. The committee therefore declared that pressure should



be exerted upon the Governments in order to prevail upon them to sign the tariff truce convention drafted in Geneva and to accept the British Labour Government's proposal to negotiate conventions for the reduction of tariffs for classes of goods; and asked for International co-operation through the League of Nations and the I.L.O., or otherwise, with a view to substituting a systematic economic world order for the chaos provoked by economic nationalism.

On the subject of gold and credit the committee proposed that there should be a democratic control of the note-issuing banks; an intensification of international collaboration between these banks; a cessation of their deflationist policy; and an international credit policy by the note-issuing banks with the object of securing a uniform distribution of gold throughout the world and of preventing the flight of capital.

There was a long passage on the political aspects of the economic crisis. First it was pointed out that the crisis was undoubtedly aggravated by the constant political unrest. Peace would therefore need to be guaranteed, said the committee, as a condition for an improvement in the economic situation, while, on the other hand, close economic co-operation was in its turn one of the surest means of consolidating peace.

Second, the committee affirmed that a solid peace clearly implied the development of international law, arbitration and justice and of organisations capable of watching over the preservation of peace and capable of guaranteeing it. But peace would only be guaranteed by the resolute pursuit of general and simultaneous disarmament.

Third, there was an urgent need, economically and politically, for closer collaboration between the European States.

Fourth, the world economic system was being seriously disorganised by the heavy payments which Germany had to make to her creditors as reparations and which they had to make to the United States. A reduction in the debts to America would be a very effective means of helping to overcome the economic difficulties of the world, but public opinion in the United States would not agree to this if there was a danger that European States would take advantage of the financial relief to strengthen their armaments.

Fifth, Europe was still living under the régime of Versailles. Europe could not live under an immutable constitution, and a method would have to be found for its revision by the collective will of the nations.

Sixth, the growth of Fascist tendencies in Italy and Germany had aggravated the crisis in credit and production. To deliver

the countries already under the yoke of Fascism, to remove the threat of dictatorship from others, and to establish democracy, including economic democracy, were therefore prime necessities, even from the economic point of view.

Seventh, the committee referred to the obstacles in the way of exchange between the Soviet republics and the rest of the world. This, they said, was undoubtedly one of the causes of economic disturbance, and was therefore an added reason for a return to normal diplomatic intercourse and the promotion of closer economic relations with the U.S.S.R.

Finally, they pointed out that the international economic crisis was being aggravated by the severe crisis through which the peoples of India, China and the colonial territories were passing. It was an interest, as well as a duty of the workers in industrially developed countries to support the efforts of their brothers in Asia and Africa to better their conditions of labour and life.<sup>1</sup>

These proposals by the joint committee were subsequently endorsed both by the General Council of the I.F.T.U. and by the Executive of the L.S.I.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, the two Internationals had been discussing the possibility of giving more intensive consideration to economic questions, and it was decided that when the Joint Committee on the World Economic Crisis and Unemployment had completed its report a new Joint Committee of the I.F.T.U. and the L.S.I. on World Economic Problems should be set to work.<sup>3</sup> This Committee, however, did not produce any studies on the scale of that of the world economic crisis and unemployment. Economic questions were left more and more to the I.F.T.U. Thus the Joint Committee on World Economic Problems decided at a meeting in May 1933 that 'it was the business of the I.F.T.U. alone to represent the economic interests of the working class at the World Economic Conference'.<sup>4</sup> It was on the political side that the collaboration between the two Internationals developed.

#### 4. FASCISM AND REACTION

A joint meeting of the Executive of the I.F.T.U. and the Bureau of the L.S.I. at Cologne in October 1930 (on the occasion

<sup>1</sup> *Fourth Congress of the L.S.I., Vienna, 1931*, p. 52. *Fighting World Economic Crisis and Unemployment*, I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1931.

<sup>2</sup> *Fourth Congress of the L.S.I., Vienna, 1931*, p. 49. *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1930-32*. I.F.T.U., Paris, 1934, p. 107.

<sup>3</sup> *Fourth Congress of the L.S.I., Vienna, 1931*, p. 141. *Bulletin of the L.S.I.* Series III, No. 2, May 1932, pp. 29, 34.

<sup>4</sup> See Chapter IV, p. 123.

of the first meeting of the Joint Committee on the World Economic Crisis and Unemployment) 'registered a strong protest against Fascism and reaction', especially in Poland, Austria, Germany and Finland.<sup>1</sup> Then for a time, the joint action of the two Internationals against Fascism was co-ordinated by the two Secretariats and given expression in the efforts to build up the International Solidarity Fund. But after Hitler's rise to power new problems arose, and more were created by the Italian attack upon Abyssinia.

In May 1933 a joint meeting of the Executive of the I.F.T.U. and the Bureau of the L.S.I. discussed the 'new and unprecedented acts of terrorism and barbarism committed by Hitler Fascism' and the question of help for the refugees.<sup>2</sup> During 1934 there were joint consultations on the arrangements for assisting the trade unionists and socialists involved in the February fighting in Austria, and on the repression of the Spanish workers after the rising in October.<sup>3</sup>

## 5. ABYSSINIA

In July 1935 a joint meeting of the L.S.I. and the I.F.T.U. noted 'with the greatest anxiety' the signs of an impending outbreak of war in Abyssinia and urged the League of Nations to apply sanctions against the aggressor. Other meetings on the same subject followed. On August 26th a newly-formed Joint Anti-War Committee reaffirmed its opinion that the League should apply sanctions and decided to call a special conference of the General Council of the I.F.T.U. and the Executive of the L.S.I. for September 6th. This conference was attended by fifty-two delegates representing the Socialist Parties and national trade union centres of twelve countries and eleven representatives of the International Trade Secretariats. It condemned the aggressive attitude of Fascist Italy and declared that the imminent danger of war made it imperative that the Covenant, including the sanctions provided for in the Covenant, be applied.<sup>4</sup>

A further meeting of the Joint Committee, held on September 27th, drew attention to the gravity of the situation once again and declared: 'It is even more obvious to-day that only the ener-

<sup>1</sup> *Fourth Congress of the L.S.I., Vienna, 1931*, p. 31. *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1930-32*. I.F.T.U., Paris, 1934, p. 95.

<sup>2</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1930-32*. I.F.T.U., Paris, 1934, p. 97. *International Information*, 1933, p. 230.

<sup>3</sup> *International Information*, 1934, pp. 238, 569. I.F.T.U., *Triennial Report*, 1933-35. Congress, London, 1936. I.F.T.U., Paris, 1937, p. 46.

<sup>4</sup> I.F.T.U., *Triennial Report*, 1933-35. Congress, London, 1936. I.F.T.U., Paris, 1937, pp. 116, 206-7. *International Information*, 1935, pp. 298, 320.

getic policy of collective security demanded by the two Internationals in their resolution of the 6th September can still preserve peace.' At the beginning of October the Italian attack upon Abyssinia actually began. On October 12th a joint conference of the General Council of the I.F.T.U. and the Executive of the L.S.I. took place. The Conference was even more representative than the one held in September. It was attended by sixty representatives of thirteen national trade union centres and fourteen International Trade Secretariats, and thirty-four representatives of seventeen Labour and Socialist Parties, as well as delegates from the International Socialist Women's Committee and the Socialist Youth International. The Conference called for 'prompt and effective sanctions' to put an end to 'this monstrous outrage upon international law', and assured the League of its whole-hearted support 'in the application of whatever sanctions may be necessary to stop this outrageous war and to restore peace'.<sup>1</sup>

It soon became clear, however, that no such drastic action would be taken. The next meeting of the Joint Anti-War Committee was held in December after the publication of the Hoare-Laval proposals. The Committee registered its opposition to the proposals, and said: 'The League of Nations is at the turning-point of its history. It must decide whether the Covenant is to become a reality and if, in this historic hour, every enterprise of war for conquest will be indicted and repressed.' Still the campaign in Abyssinia continued. The Hoare-Laval proposals were dropped, but no firm decision to apply sanctions was taken. In January 1936 a meeting of the Executive of the I.F.T.U. and the Bureau of the L.S.I. made a final appeal to the States upon whom the application of sanctions most directly depended, 'not to hesitate any longer before taking the necessary initiative'. It pointed out that only the strict application of international law could deter other aggressors, and added that, 'If Mussolini's aggression were not suppressed there would be little chance of escaping in the near future an act of aggression by Hitlerite Germany and militarist Japan.'<sup>2</sup>

## 6. SPAIN

Italy, however, went on to conquer Abyssinia and Hitler proceeded to reoccupy the Rhineland in violation of the Treaty

<sup>1</sup> I.F.T.U., *Triennial Report, 1933-35. Congress, London, 1936.* I.F.T.U., Paris, 1937, pp. 118, 208. *International Information, 1935*, pp. 329, 358.

<sup>2</sup> I.F.T.U., *Triennial Report, 1933-35. Congress, London, 1936.* I.F.T.U., Paris, 1937, pp. 120, 211, 212. *International Information, 1935*, p. 449. *International Information, 1936*, p. 19.

of Locarno. The dangers of Hitler's act, in particular, were discussed at a special conference of the General Council of the I.F.T.U. and the Executive of the L.S.I. in London in March 1936.<sup>1</sup> Later in 1936 the civil war broke out in Spain. This produced a new set of problems for the two Internationals and led to another series of joint meetings and conferences. The fighting broke out a few days after the International Trade Union Congress in London, which ended on July 11th, and on July 28th the I.F.T.U. and the L.S.I. issued their first joint appeal for relief of the Spanish republicans and democrats. But even before this they had expressed their sentiments separately.<sup>2</sup>

Throughout the period of the civil war the two Internationals endeavoured to rally public opinion behind the Spanish republican forces and to persuade the Governments of Britain, France and other democratic countries to support the Spanish Government in its struggle against General Franco. A meeting of the Presidents and Secretaries of the L.S.I. and the I.F.T.U. in July 1936, which decided on the above-mentioned joint appeal, was followed by a second meeting in August. A special conference of the General Council of the I.F.T.U. and the Executive of the L.S.I. took place in September, while in October there was a meeting of the I.F.T.U. Executive and the Bureau of the L.S.I., with delegations from the affiliated organisations in Britain and France. In December there was another special conference.<sup>3</sup>

Further meetings were held during 1937. In January the Presidents and Secretaries met again, this time with delegations from Britain and France. A meeting of the I.F.T.U. Executive and the Bureau of the L.S.I. took place in February. Then in March there was another conference of the I.F.T.U. General Council and the Executive of the L.S.I., but this time the L.S.I. representation was enlarged by the addition of delegates from the Labour and Socialist groups in various parliaments. Two hundred representatives from Socialist parties and trade unions, representing nineteen countries and eighteen International Trade Secretariats, were present. The British delegation to the conference consisted of members of the General Council of the T.U.C., the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party and the Executive of the Parliamentary Labour Party. Four

<sup>1</sup> *The International Trade Union Movement*, I.F.T.U., Paris, Vol. XVII, Nos. 1-7, January-July 1937, p. 18. *International Information*, 1936, p. 89.

<sup>2</sup> *The International Trade Union Movement*, I.F.T.U., Paris, Vol. XVII, Nos. 1-7, January-July 1937, p. 5. *International Information*, 1936, p. 281.

<sup>3</sup> *The International Trade Union Movement*, I.F.T.U., Paris, Vol. XVII, Nos. 1-7, January-July 1937, pp. 3, 20. *International Information*, 1936, pp. 316, 359, 417, 477.

other meetings took place in 1937 on the same subject. There was a joint consultation between the Presidents, Secretaries and other representatives in May and again in June, while in June and September there were joint meetings of the Executive of the I.F.T.U. and the Bureau of the L.S.I.<sup>1</sup>

From the beginning the two Internationals maintained that the Spanish Government had a right to purchase the arms needed for its defence. When the policy of 'non-intervention' was embarked upon by the French and British and other Governments, the I.F.T.U. and the L.S.I. accepted the policy with great reluctance and declared that it could only be valid if it were loyally observed by all. They still held that the Spanish Government should enjoy 'full commercial liberty'. When measures for the 'supervision' of non-intervention were proposed they remained sceptical. There was, however, nothing they could do to secure effective assistance for the Spanish republicans and democrats, as long as the Governments themselves stood aside. The steps taken by the Internationals to provide food, medical supplies and other forms of relief for Spain have already been mentioned.<sup>2</sup>

## 7. CHINA AND JAPAN

As the civil war in Spain dragged on the world political situation deteriorated. The Japanese campaign against China gave rise to increasing anxiety and during 1938 even more serious developments took place in Europe itself. A joint meeting of the Bureau of the L.S.I. and the Executive of the I.F.T.U. in January 1938 considered the problem of China and Japan.<sup>3</sup> It came to the conclusion that collective security measures should be taken against Japan and that the Governments of the world should fulfil their obligations under the Covenant of the League of Nations. The meeting recommended, in particular, that all credits to Japan should be stopped, that all markets for Japanese exports should be closed and that an embargo should be placed

<sup>1</sup> *The International Trade Union Movement*, I.F.T.U., Paris, Vol. XVII, Nos. 1-7, January-July 1937, pp. 3, 20, 27, 28-30. *The International Trade Union Movement*, I.F.T.U., Paris, Vol. XVIII, Nos. 3-5, March-May 1938, pp. 16, 17, 26, 39. *International Information*, 1937, pp. 47, 92, 94, 95, 216, 257, 259, 366. *Bulletin of the L.S.I. Series 4*, No. 1, August 1937. *Report of the 36th Annual Conference of the Labour Party*, Edinburgh, 1936, pp. 28, 169, 212, 258. *Report of the 68th Annual Trades Union Congress*, Plymouth, 1936, pp. 69, 194, 359, 390, 488. *Report of the 27th Annual Conference of the Labour Party*, Bournemouth, 1937, pp. 6, 212. *Report of the 69th Annual Trades Union Congress*, Norwich, 1937, pp. 173-176.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 92.

<sup>3</sup> *The International Trade Union Movement*, I.F.T.U., Paris, Vol. XVIII, Nos. 3-5, March-May 1938, p. 21. *International Information*, 1938, p. 15.

on raw materials for Japan, especially those suitable for war purposes.

### 8. AUSTRIA

Two months later, in March, the world was shocked by Hitler's march into Austria. Within a few days there was a joint meeting of the Executive of the I.F.T.U. and the Bureau of the L.S.I., followed by a joint conference of the I.F.T.U. General Council and the L.S.I. Executive. The conference, which was attended by 120 delegates from twelve trade union national centres, fourteen International Trade Secretariats and twenty Labour and Socialist parties, declared that the events of the last few days had 'dissipated any illusions which still remained'. The whole of Europe, said the conference resolution, 'is exposed to a Fascist dictation which would reduce it to misery and slavery. This is the situation which has been brought about by a few years of mistakes and fear.'

In a call to action the conference urged the organisations affiliated to the two Internationals, (1) to use all the means in their power, 'even the most energetic', to put an end to the policy of 'non-intervention', and to be ready 'to support the British and French Governments in whatever measures, moral, political, financial, economic or military, which may be necessary to bring the Italian and German aggression to an end, measures in which every country, great and small, should co-operate according to its means'; (2) to intensify their campaign for solidarity on behalf of Spain; and (3) to take appropriate action immediately with a view to securing that the economic and political independence of Czechoslovakia be 'effectively guaranteed by precise and positive undertakings, and in the first place by France and Great Britain'. The conference also recommended the affiliated organisations to 'work towards the end that all European nations who are determined effectively to defend their liberty by means of collective security shall immediately give reciprocal guarantees of mutual assistance in the case of aggression, to be implemented by all the means in their power, including military means'.<sup>1</sup>

### 9. CZECHOSLOVAKIA

But within six months the nations were preparing to capitulate before Hitler's threat to partition Czechoslovakia. Consultations

<sup>1</sup> *The International Trade Union Movement*, I.F.T.U., Paris, Vol. XVIII, Nos. 3-5, March-May 1938, p. 46. *International Information*, 1938, p. 118.

were carried on between the Internationals and their affiliated organisations at the time of the Munich agreements, and a joint enlarged meeting of the L.S.I. and the I.F.T.U. took place in London on September 20th. The Presidents and Secretaries of the two Internationals attended, together with representatives of the T.U.C. and the Labour Party, the French Confédération Générale du Travail and the French Socialist Party. A communiqué issued after the meeting stated that 'there was a full interchange of information as to the attitude and action of the respective bodies regarding the present grave situation and in particular the new position created by the joint adoption by the British and French Governments of the plan of surrender to Hitler's threat of aggression'.<sup>1</sup>

A further meeting of the Bureau of the L.S.I. and the Executive of the I.F.T.U. was held in Paris in November. This meeting considered once again the position in Spain. The two Internationals feared that the democratic nations, 'slipping down the fatal slope of continual concessions', might sacrifice Spain in the same way as Czechoslovakia, 'in the vain and selfish hope of saving their own peace, freedom and independence'. The meeting declared against 'any attempt to impose a solution by force on the Spanish people from outside'. There must be no submission to the will of the Fascist countries, they said, but a 'restoration of international law on behalf of the Spanish Republic'. On behalf of the two Internationals the meeting declared that a settlement of the war in Spain could not be sought without consultation of the Spanish people, and that a settlement could only be found on the lines of international law by the withdrawal of all the foreign troops from Spain. The meeting also considered proposals for a world peace campaign and decided to refer them back for further consideration and discussion at a later joint meeting.<sup>2</sup>

One further joint meeting was held before the war—a meeting of the officers of the two Internationals, with representatives of the Labour movements in Britain and France in January 1939. This meeting, too, was concerned with Spain. It insisted on the grave dangers that would follow for France, Great Britain and the other peace-loving nations 'if Catalonia were conquered by the foreign invaders under General Franco's command' and reiterated the demand 'that the Franco-Spanish frontier shall be opened for the passage of arms and that the legal right of the

<sup>1</sup> *International Information*, 1938, p. 348.

<sup>2</sup> *The International Trade Union Movement*, I.F.T.U., Paris, Vol. XVIII, Nos. 10-12, October-December 1938, p. 200. *International Information*, 1938, p. 495.



Spanish Government to purchase arms shall be restored'.<sup>1</sup> By this time the civil war was in its closing stages and shortly afterwards the republican resistance collapsed.

It will be seen from this survey that the relations between the two Internationals were always such that they were able to consult together on problems of mutual concern and to agree upon a common line. During the decade before 1939, in fact, they took joint decisions on all the great international issues that arose. It does not follow, however, that the relations between the two Internationals were completely satisfactory. The working arrangement between them might well have been much closer.

<sup>1</sup> *International Information*, 1939, p. 46. *The International Trade Union Movement*, I.F.T.U., Paris, Vol. XIX, Nos. 1-2, January-February 1939, p. 3.

## CHAPTER IV

# WORK OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR MOVEMENT—INDUSTRIAL

### WORK OF THE I.F.T.U.

ALTHOUGH the main work of the I.F.T.U. lies in the industrial field, it is bound, as we have seen, to take a certain interest in political questions too. Some of the economic and industrial problems which confront the workers of the different countries cannot be solved by trade union action alone; they call for legislation or some other kind of political intervention.

Accordingly the frontier between the industrial questions dealt with by the I.F.T.U. and the political matters handled by the L.S.I. is vaguely defined and constantly changing. It is, however, essential for the two organisations to speak with one voice, or at least to avoid contradicting each other. Even where the problems involved did not call for joint deliberation and decision the I.F.T.U. and the L.S.I. had to keep each other closely informed on policy and activities. Like the trade unions and Socialist parties in the separate countries, the two international organisations had to endeavour to march in step.

### I. FORMULATION OF POLICY

In its work of formulating policy the I.F.T.U. attempted, of course, to elaborate long-term programmes, as well as to cope with current questions. The progress of this work (as on the political side) was influenced by the circumstances in the various countries and by the fact that the affiliated national centres differed, or had not yet reached full agreement on some of the fundamental issues. The national centres were not all agreed, for example, on the ultimate objects of trade unionism, or on trade union methods, or on the relations between trade unions and political parties, or on the place of trade unionism in the State. The trade union movements of the various countries differed, as did the Labour and Socialist Parties, in structure, in outlook, in size and importance, and in their possibilities of action. And, of course, they worked in differing national surroundings. Some were recognised, and others opposed by the employers. Some were welcomed and encouraged by their

Governments, some were tolerated, some were persecuted and some driven underground.<sup>1</sup>

As in the case of the L.S.I. the policy of the I.F.T.U. was to be found in resolutions and other statements adopted from time to time. There was no basic document containing a minimum programme or comprehensive declaration of policy which all affiliated national centres were expected to accept. Certain general aims and principles were embodied in the rules of the I.F.T.U.,<sup>2</sup> but to ascertain the policy of the organisation on any given subject it is necessary to examine the decisions of the various congresses and meetings. The most authoritative statements of policy were those adopted at the triennial International Trade Union Congress. During the intervals between the Congresses, decisions were taken by the Executive (comprising the President, Vice-Presidents and Secretaries) and by the General Council, which was composed of delegates representing the affiliated national centres, with representatives of the International Trade Secretariats in an advisory capacity. Long-term programmes were usually adopted by the Congress after they had been considered by the Executive, the General Council or both. The I.F.T.U. set up fewer special committees for the study of great problems than did the L.S.I. Among the exceptions were the joint committees of the two bodies, the Committee of Economic Experts, set up in 1938<sup>3</sup> and the Study Committee appointed a few weeks before the war to give detailed consideration to the policy of the I.F.T.U. in the light of world changes.<sup>4</sup> There was, perhaps, less need for the appointment of special committees in the case of the I.F.T.U., since the I.F.T.U. Executive met, as a rule, six times a year, and was therefore able to follow up a subject over a period; whereas the Bureau of the L.S.I. rarely met more than two or three times a year, unless there was urgent business to discuss.

<sup>1</sup> See the descriptions of the trade union movements in various countries in the *Reports on Freedom of Association*, published by the I.L.O. Vol. I: Comparative Analysis, 1927; Vol. II: Great Britain, Irish Free State, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Switzerland, 1927; Vol. III: Germany, former Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary, Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovak Republic, Poland, Baltic States, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, 1928; Vol. IV: Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Serb-Croat-Slovene Kingdom, Bulgaria, Roumania, 1928; Vol. V: United States of America, Latin America, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand, India, China, Japan, 1930. See also the accounts of the trade union movement in Great Britain, Sweden, etc., in the International Trade Union Library, published by the I.F.T.U., Amsterdam; and H. A. Marquand and others: *Organised Labour in Four Continents*, Longmans Green, London, 1939.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter II, p. 52.

<sup>3</sup> *The International Trade Union Movement*, Vol. XIX, Nos. 6-7, June-July 1939, p. 201.

<sup>4</sup> *The International Trade Union Movement*, Vol. XIX, Nos. 6-7, June-July 1939, p. 206.

### a. *Political Questions*

At no time has the I.F.T.U. confined itself strictly to economic and industrial questions. Throughout the period since its re-establishment in 1919 it has been confronted with political developments which had direct consequences for workers in industry, industrial problems which demanded political as well as industrial action for their solution, and questions which were so vast and complex that their industrial and political aspects could not be separated. At its first Congress in 1919 the I.F.T.U. dealt with the powers and functions of the League of Nations, and with the blockade of Russia, both *prima facie* political questions; while the Rome Congress in 1922 discussed disarmament and war, a problem which, though primarily political, is of direct concern to industry. The problem of preventing war was, in fact, one of the main preoccupations of the I.F.T.U. An International Peace Congress was held at The Hague under the auspices of the I.F.T.U. in December 1922.<sup>1</sup> The next Congress of the I.F.T.U., held in Vienna in 1924, agreed upon a campaign against war and militarism, and the question came up again at Paris in 1927, when a resolution was adopted on 'The Disarmament Question and the Fight against War and Militarism.' Disarmament was also one of the questions before the Stockholm Congress in 1930. By this time the I.F.T.U. and the L.S.I. had begun to consider the matter jointly.<sup>2</sup>

Another of the semi-industrial, semi-political problems was presented by the growth of Fascism. A resolution against reaction and Fascism was passed at Vienna in 1924, and from then onwards the question was always before the I.F.T.U. in one form or another. With the development of the world economic crisis in the nineteen-thirties it became more acute. At the Brussels Congress in 1933 a general boycott of German goods was advocated as a form of action against Fascism, and an appeal was made to the League of Nations to take up the cause of the refugees from Germany. A resolution of protest against the Fascist terror was passed at London in 1936 and at the same Congress the question was linked to the other great problem in a resolution on 'War, Disarmament and Fascism'. The last pre-war Congress, at Zurich in 1939, also found itself confronted with problems of the same kind. Its decisions included resolutions on the war in China, against the racial perse-

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the International Peace Congress, The Hague, 1922.* Published by the I.F.T.U.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter III, p. 102.

cution practised by the dictators, and on the action to be taken in favour of peace.

### b. *Industrial Questions*

The industrial questions dealt with by the I.F.T.U. were many and varied. One of the most important decisions at the first Congress in 1919 was a resolution on the participation of the trade unions in the Washington Conference, which was to discuss the hours of labour.<sup>1</sup> Another resolution drew attention to the inadequacies of the labour clauses of the Peace Treaty, as compared with the programme drawn up by the International Trade Union Conference at Berne earlier in the year. A third instructed the Bureau of the I.F.T.U. to keep the national centres informed of the results of experiments in socialisation in the various countries. All these questions, although they were of prime importance for the trade unions, had political as well as industrial implications.

A year later a Special International Trade Union Congress was held in London to frame a policy of economic reconstruction, based on a programme drafted by the Management Committee with a view to the restoration of Europe and the resumption of economic activity. This was the beginning of a long series of discussions on economic problems, which continued right down to the last Congress in 1939. Thus, economic reconstruction in Europe was again discussed at the Rome Congress in 1922, while proposals on the 'Economic Situation of the Workers' were drawn up at Paris in 1927. At Stockholm in 1930 an economic policy for the I.F.T.U. was approved, and the subject came up again at Brussels in 1933 under the heading of 'Economic Planning'. A further decision on economic planning was taken at the London Congress in 1936, when consideration was also given to 'The Fight against the Crisis'. At Zurich in 1939 the Congress passed resolutions on 'The Economic Activities of the I.F.T.U.' and on 'Economic Policy and Combatting the Slump'.

Industrial and social legislation also came under consideration at various times. The Congresses of 1922, 1924 and 1927 discussed the eight-hour day, while the 1930 Congress decided upon a campaign in favour of a 44-hour week. At Zurich in 1939 the question of working hours was again one of the principal items of business. Night work and Sunday work in bakeries, which was the subject of one of the decisions of the 1924 Congress, was another of the problems in this field. A programme

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 127.

of international social legislation was adopted at Vienna in 1924. Another social legislation programme was discussed at Stockholm in 1930, and three years later the matter was considered again under the heading of 'Social Policy'.

### c. *Economic Policy*

On some of these subjects, such as economic questions, social legislation and the problems of war and disarmament, the I.F.T.U. was able to formulate long-term programmes. The programme for the restoration of Europe and the resumption of economic activity, adopted by the Special Congress in London in 1920,<sup>1</sup> was not confined to proposals for the solution of immediate post-war problems but envisaged measures to be applied over a period of years. It 'had to be of such a character as would serve on the one hand to combat reaction and the danger of a new world war and on the other hand to materially contribute to the establishment of a new system which could form a sound basis for world economic restoration'.<sup>2</sup> By 1927 the I.F.T.U. felt the need to elaborate another programme. Post-war recovery had been disappointing, and the economic situation of the workers in the different countries gave cause for serious concern. The Paris Congress therefore decided that a 'permanent programme of demands and action' should be prepared. To this end the national centres were invited to consider the furtherance of general economic progress, rationalisation, national and international cartels, and the home market and its economic importance. These questions were then to be discussed by the General Council of the I.F.T.U. in order that the proposed programme might be drawn up.<sup>3</sup> After considering the replies the Executive, assisted by a Committee of Experts, went ahead with the preparation of a programme, which was then submitted to the General Council. The draft was duly accepted, not as a hard and fast programme but as a body of guiding principles for the I.F.T.U. and its affiliated national centres.<sup>4</sup>

At the suggestion of the General Council the matter was again considered at the Stockholm Congress in 1930. There the document was unanimously adopted, with trifling alterations,

<sup>1</sup> *The International Trade Union Movement, Official Organ of the I.F.T.U.*, Amsterdam, Supplement IV.

<sup>2</sup> *The International Trade Union Movement, Official Organ of the I.F.T.U.*, Amsterdam, Supplement V.

<sup>3</sup> *Fourth Ordinary Congress of the I.F.T.U., Paris, 1927. Report of Proceedings.* I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1927, p. 75.

<sup>4</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., Paris, 1927-30, Congress, Stockholm, 1930.* I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1931, p. 91.

as 'The Economic Policy of the I.F.T.U.'<sup>1</sup> It consisted of two complementary parts—one on international and the other on national problems—together with a section on workers' participation in economic development. In the international sphere the policy called for an International Economic Office of the League of Nations, with participation for the organised working class; the supervision of international trusts, cartels and agreements by the economic organisation of the League; the promotion of international trade; courts of arbitration for disputes on economic questions; international minimum standards of working conditions; and the maintenance of a stable currency. Its national demands related to rationalisation; the public supervision of credit and currency policy; the promotion of public economic enterprises, socialisation and municipal enterprise; the development of trade union and co-operative undertakings; the publication of information on businesses, and the supervision of monopolies; the improvement of agriculture; and the expansion of home markets. The section on workers' participation in economic development urged the formation of National Economic Councils in the various countries, with representation for the trade unions. It also called for trade union representation on public bodies exercising advisory or executive functions in connection with economic questions.

In its report to the Congress the commission which had examined the policy in draft suggested certain steps that might be taken to ensure that the demands were pressed home by the individual national centres. Members of the commission felt that a special department should be created to exert pressure on the national centres and record the action taken by them in the sphere of economic policy. The Congress accepted this view and endorsed not only the policy itself, but also the commission's proposals for action, requesting the Executive, inter alia, to consider the establishment of a special department in the Secretariat for promoting the economic policy of the I.F.T.U., and to report to the next Congress on the experience gained in the application of trade union economic policy. The report was also to supplement the 'Economic Policy' of the I.F.T.U. if necessary.<sup>2</sup> Three years later, the Brussels Congress reiterated these demands when adopting a new resolution on 'Economic Planning'.

Shortly after the Stockholm Congress the I.F.T.U. entered into joint discussions with the L.S.I., which resulted in the

<sup>1</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1927-30, Congress, Stockholm, 1930.* I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1931, pp. 297, 317, 333, 383.

<sup>2</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U. 1927-30, Congress, Stockholm, 1930.* I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1931, p. 317.

adoption of the so-called 'Zurich Resolutions' on unemployment and the world crisis.<sup>1</sup> When this work had been completed the I.F.T.U. Executive turned to a consideration of the financial aspects of the crisis. In this connection it stressed, amongst other things, the need for a large-scale international scheme for the creation of employment. For the purpose of studying ways and means of financing such schemes, and of proposing solutions for the international money and credit crisis, the Executive appointed in 1931 a Committee of Economic and Financial Experts drawn from various countries. The report of the committee, based on an examination of proposals put forward by Léon Jouhaux and the German trade unions, was submitted to the Executive in January 1932 and set apart for the use of I.F.T.U. delegates to committees of the League of Nations and the I.L.O.<sup>2</sup>

Further consideration of the economic crisis led to demands in 1932 for the fundamental reconstruction of the economic system and a final settlement of the question of reparations.<sup>3</sup> Studies were then undertaken in preparation for the World Economic Conference in London. A memorandum prepared by the Secretariat was considered by the Executive and the General Council, discussed at joint meetings of the L.S.I. and the I.F.T.U. and submitted to the national centres. To deal with this question the two Internationals appointed a Joint Economic Committee consisting of Léon Jouhaux (France), Rudolf Tayerle (Czechoslovakia) and Walter Schevenels (General Secretary) for the I.F.T.U.; and Professor de Brouckère (Belgium), Dr. Rudolf Hilferding (Germany) and Senator Wibaut (Holland) for the L.S.I. In the course of the joint discussions it was unanimously agreed that the representation of the workers at the World Economic Conference was a matter for the I.F.T.U. alone. The L.S.I., however, lent its support to the I.F.T.U. memorandum, and a joint declaration published in May 1933 emphasised the need for the cancellation of war debts, the international stabilisation of currencies, the removal of restrictions on the circulation of capital and goods, the maintenance of the level of wages and the restoration of the workers' standard of living, the reduction of the hours of labour to forty per week, and a comprehensive programme of international public works.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter III, p. 106.

<sup>2</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1930-32*, I.F.T.U., Paris, 1934, p. 108.

<sup>3</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1930-32*, I.F.T.U., Paris, 1934, pp. 112, 116.

<sup>4</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1930-32*, I.F.T.U., Paris, 1934, p. 119.



#### d. *Economic Planning*

These developments led the Executive of the I.F.T.U. to the conclusion that alterations and additions might need to be made to the policy of the I.F.T.U. on economic questions. A draft programme on 'International Economic Planning', prepared by the Secretariat, was accordingly considered by the Executive in November 1932 and referred to a specially-appointed Committee of Experts. In its final form the programme ('I.F.T.U. Demands for Economic Planning') was submitted to the Brussels Congress of 1933. The Congress resolution approving the 'Demands' affirmed the belief of the I.F.T.U. in a system of international economic planning and a fundamental reconstruction of the economic system.<sup>1</sup>

Those were, in fact, the main ideas behind the 'Demands', which ran to ninety-five paragraphs dealing with the world economic system; commercial policy; currency questions; credit questions; production; traffic, transport and distribution; the regulation of prices; agriculture; and the organisation of an economic system for supplying human needs.<sup>2</sup>

By the adoption of this programme and the passage of the 'Zurich Resolutions', it was felt that the 'Economic Policy' of the I.F.T.U. had been brought up to date.<sup>3</sup> The report to the London Congress three years later claimed, indeed, that the Brussels decision had represented a turning point in trade union economic policy by laying the foundations for the future economic policy of the national centres. In many countries progress had been made by the trade unions in the promotion of economic planning, and a comparison of the different plans showed that they all contained the basic features of the I.F.T.U. 'Demands for Economic Planning'.<sup>4</sup> The *rapporteur* to the London Congress, Corneille Mertens (Belgium), pointed out that there was no need to compile new statements of policy. What was needed was intensified action and further systematic work. In a resolution on 'Economic Planning' the Congress instructed the Executive to summon a Conference of the national centres for the purpose of studying the international aspects of the practical action to be taken against the crisis by means of planning. Another resolution, on 'The Fight against the Crisis', reaffirmed the previous decisions, and particularly the 'Zurich

<sup>1</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1930-32*, I.F.T.U., Paris, 1934, pp. 364, 389.

<sup>2</sup> *I.F.T.U., Triennial Report, 1933-35, Congress, London, 1936*. I.F.T.U., Paris, 1937, p. 226.

<sup>3</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1930-32*, I.F.T.U., Paris, 1934, pp. 121, 123.

<sup>4</sup> *I.F.T.U., Triennial Report, 1933-35, Congress, London, 1936*. I.F.T.U., Paris, 1937, p. 132.

Resolutions', adopted jointly by the I.F.T.U. and the L.S.I.<sup>1</sup>

From the time of the London Congress in 1936 till the next Congress was held in 1939, the economic activities of the I.F.T.U. were increasingly concerned with the problems thrown up by the preparations of the totalitarian countries for war and the resulting all-round re-armament. In pursuance of the decision of the London Congress a Conference of Economic Experts was held in the spring of 1937, and on the basis of the report of the Conference the General Council decided in June 1937 that the economic activities of the I.F.T.U. should be extended. A second Conference of Economic Experts in 1938 considered the results of an enquiry into the economic work of the national centres, which revealed that the unions in the various countries were paying increasing attention to economic matters. The Conference recommended the preparation of a policy of systematic planning against the effects of another slump and the creation of a small standing economic committee of the I.F.T.U. to keep in constant touch with the economic experts of the national centres. By the time of the next General Council meeting in May 1938 a printed report of nearly two hundred pages on the economic policy of the I.F.T.U., the forty-hour week and the fight against the slump, had been worked out and an Economic Committee of the I.F.T.U. had been appointed, with Corneille Mertens as its chairman. In presenting the report to the General Council, Mertens again stressed the need for economic planning and urged the national centres to create economic departments.<sup>2</sup> The Zurich Congress in 1939 considered a body of 'Trade Union Principles for Preventing and Combating the Slump', drawn up by the Economic Committee, and passed three resolutions on 'Economic Policy and Combating the Slump', 'Hours of Work' and the 'Economic Activities of the I.F.T.U.'. In these resolutions—the last Congress decisions taken before the war—the I.F.T.U. reaffirmed its economic policy, called for a planned economy to fulfil public needs and raise the workers' standard of living, emphasised the need for the democratic States to pursue a common economic policy, and gave instructions for the still further development of economic activities.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I.F.T.U., *Triennial Report, 1933-35, Congress, London, 1936*. I.F.T.U., Paris, 1937, pp. 382, 436, 460, 461.

<sup>2</sup> *The International Trade Union Movement*, Vol. XVIII, Nos. 3-5, March-May 1938, pp. 28, 45, 61.

<sup>3</sup> *The International Trade Union Movement*, Vol. XIX, Nos. 6-7, June-July 1939, pp. 201, 207.

### e. *Social Policy*

It was at the Vienna Congress in 1924 that the I.F.T.U. laid down its first comprehensive programme of international social legislation. Until then the I.F.T.U. had based its activities in this sphere upon the proposals put forward by the Berne Conference in 1919.<sup>1</sup> The Vienna Congress took as its starting point a paper prepared by Jan Oudegeest, one of the Secretaries of the I.F.T.U., and unanimously adopted his draft with very few alterations. The 'Programme for International Social Legislation', as it was called, consisted of a number of minimum demands. These had already been partially realised in some countries, and the Congress felt that they should be embodied in international law. They related to compulsory school attendance, vocational education and the prohibition of children's work for wages; the working hours of young persons, continued education, and the prohibition of the employment of young persons in dangerous and unhealthy occupations; hours of work for women, the prohibition of the employment of women on nightwork, in specially unhealthy trades or underground, employment before and after confinement, maternity insurance, and equal pay for equal work; the eight-hour day or 48-hour week, unnecessary nightwork and the free Saturday afternoon; the weekly rest; vocational diseases and factory accidents; the extension of labour protection and social insurance to home work; freedom of association and equality of treatment for foreign workers; emigration and immigration; wages boards; unemployment insurance, accident insurance, and widows', orphans', old age, sickness and disablement insurance; an international seamen's code; the administration of factory legislation; workers' control; employment exchanges; and State action to meet the housing shortage.<sup>2</sup>

In 1930 the Executive of the I.F.T.U. asked the Stockholm Congress to consider the subject of social legislation again. The draft of a new programme was submitted to the Congress by Mertens, who pointed out in an introductory paper that before 1914 the trade unions had considered that action in favour of social legislation was a matter for the political parties, whereas they were now compelled to deal with this and other grave problems which transcended the narrower question of wages, hours and conditions of labour. In a resolution recommending the preparation of a new programme of social legislation the

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter I, p. 20.

<sup>2</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1922-24*. I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1924, pp. 238, 250, 369.

Congress enumerated the heads of a programme and instructed the Executive to prepare a complete draft in consultation with the affiliated organisations. The programme was to cover the various branches of social insurance, including insurance against accidents and occupational diseases, and also family allowances; and measures of special protection in regard to hours, holidays and rest days, children, women and young persons, training and apprenticeship, freedom of association, labour contracts and collective agreements, labour law and industrial health. Attention was also to be given to the arrangements for inspection and the prevention of accidents.<sup>1</sup>

After the Stockholm Congress a new draft prepared by the Secretariat was considered by the Executive, referred to the national centres, amended and put into final form for submission to the Brussels Congress in 1933 as 'Guiding Principles for the Social Policy of the I.F.T.U.'. The Congress expressed its approval of the new programme and passed a resolution on 'Social Policy', indicating certain forms of action which it was thought should be undertaken immediately.<sup>2</sup> The 'Guiding Principles' went into great detail. In ninety paragraphs they dealt with liberty of association, social insurance, labour protection (with special reference to hours of work, holidays and leisure, the protection of children, young persons and women, home work, collective agreements and the trade union right of consultation), and the application and supervision of labour protection. These 'Guiding Principles' held the field as the social policy of the I.F.T.U. down to the outbreak of war.<sup>3</sup>

#### *f. I.L.O.*

In promoting its plans for international social legislation the I.F.T.U. paid close attention to the work of the International Labour Organisation. At its Foundation Congress in 1919 the I.F.T.U. had to decide its attitude towards the Labour clauses of the Peace Treaty and the new International Labour Organisation which was being established by the Governments. The first International Labour Conference was to be held at Washington shortly after the Congress of the I.F.T.U., and the question whether the trade unions should support the Washington Conference or not was one of the biggest practical issues that the

<sup>1</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1927-30, Congress, Stockholm, 1930.* I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1931, pp. 229, 312, 345, 388.

<sup>2</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1930-32, I.F.T.U., Paris, 1934,* pp. 79, 370, 394, 407.

<sup>3</sup> *I.F.T.U., Triennial Report, 1933-35, Congress, London, 1936.* I.F.T.U., Paris, 1937, pp. 102, 181.

Congress had to face. The Congress agreed to co-operate in the work of the Conference provided that the representatives of the trade union movement from all countries were admitted without exception, and that the delegates appointed by the national centres of the I.F.T.U. were recognized as the representatives of the Labour Movement.<sup>1</sup> Representatives of the national centres, including members of the Bureau of the I.F.T.U., attended the Conference and accepted the leadership of the I.F.T.U. in their work. Some of them were also present at the first meeting of the Governing Body of the I.L.O.

The first report on the activities of the I.F.T.U., submitted to the Rome Congress in 1922, contained a chapter on social legislation which dealt with the Washington Conference and the Conferences of 1920 and 1921. An Appendix to the report outlined the activities of the workers' group at the various meetings of the Governing Body.<sup>2</sup> From that time onwards the reports submitted to the Congresses of the I.F.T.U. contained full accounts of the work of the I.L.O. and of the part played by the workers' delegates. At the International Labour Conferences and at meetings of the Governing Body many of the proposals for international social legislation worked out by the I.F.T.U. were put forward. Prominent members of the I.F.T.U. Executive and General Council, such as Jouhaux and Mertens, took a leading part in the work of the I.L.O. as representatives of the trade union centres in their respective countries. Moreover, the I.F.T.U. was responsible for calling meetings of the workers' group at the International Labour Conferences, to enable the trade union representatives from the different countries to agree on the line to be taken in relation to the agenda, the election of officers and the other problems which came up from year to year.<sup>3</sup>

### *g. Trade Unionism and the Community*

During the last few years before the war the general policy of the I.F.T.U. was re-examined in the light of the changing circumstances. Thus the problems of freedom of association and the trade union attitude towards the State were examined in a memorandum submitted to the 1936 Congress by Rudolf Tayerle (Czechoslovakia) on behalf of the Executive. Tayerle

<sup>1</sup> *The International Trade Union Movement, Official Organ of the I.F.T.U.*, Amsterdam, Supplement II, July 1921, p. 47.

<sup>2</sup> *The International Trade Union Movement, Official Organ of the I.F.T.U.*, Supplement V, April 1922, pp. 25, 93.

<sup>3</sup> See the Reports of the I.F.T.U. already cited and the Reports on the International Labour Conferences published by the I.L.O.

referred to some of the problems connected with freedom of association and freedom of trade union action, and emphasised that trade unions cannot but be supporters of the democratic State. He drew attention to the various solutions proposed for dealing with social problems—anarcho-syndicalism, the corporate State, the Communist solution—and rejected them all in favour of the democratic principle. He also affirmed that the present-day conception of socialisation never implies the direct administration of industry by Governments but autonomous industrial management based on the interests of employers, workers and consumers, and that the free trade unions would have to take part in the management of industry as the workers' representatives.

A discussion on the basis of this paper led to the unanimous adoption of a resolution on trade union liberty. The resolution declared that the liberty and independence of the trade unions constitute an indispensable condition for an effective representation of the interests of the working class. It reaffirmed that the free trade unions could not be replaced by organisations which people are compelled to join, and by means of which the trade unions are made helpless tools of the State or even of the employers, as in Germany, Italy and Austria. Efforts to promote the corporate form of State were simply a means of reducing or destroying the influence of the workers upon their economic, social and cultural conditions. The Congress accordingly instructed the Executive to miss no opportunity of protecting trade union liberty and to support all efforts to restore freedom of organisation wherever it had been abolished or curtailed.<sup>1</sup>

At the Zurich Congress in 1939 a debate on 'Problems of Trade Union Strategy and Policy' was opened on behalf of the Executive by E. Kupers (Holland). The speaker recalled that in their early days the trade unions had had two enemies, the employers and the State. Gradually, however, freedom of association had everywhere been established. Times had changed and trade unionism had extended its influence and power. Kupers spoke of the recognition of trade unions, the conclusion of collective agreements, the extension of collective agreements to third parties, conciliation and arbitration, minimum wages, the increasing tendency to avoid strikes, State intervention in labour disputes, and the changed attitude of the trade unions to the question of national defence—and he suggested that the I.F.T.U. should open a new enquiry into the whole question with a view to the adoption of conclusions. The suggestion was

<sup>1</sup> I.F.T.U., *Triennial Report, 1933-35, Congress, London, 1936*. I.F.T.U. Paris, 1937, pp. 394, 440, 451, 461.

accepted, but unfortunately the war broke out two months later and the enquiry had to be put off.<sup>1</sup>

The same fate overtook the work of a Study Committee appointed by the Zurich Congress to deal with proposals submitted to the Congress by the unions of Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland regarding the future activities of the I.F.T.U. Had the war not broken out the Committee would have given detailed consideration to the policy of the I.F.T.U. in view of the changing world situation.<sup>2</sup>

## 2. ORGANISATION

In the sphere of organisation the problems of the I.F.T.U. were similar to those of the other international bodies. It was concerned with its own internal structure, its position in the international labour movement, its relations with the affiliated centres in various countries, the extension of its organisation to countries overseas, the encouragement of trade unionism in backward regions, the situation of organisations driven underground, and the attitude to be adopted towards the Communists and the trade unions in Russia.

On various occasions, notably at the Vienna Congress in 1924, and the Paris Congress in 1927, changes were made in the rules of the I.F.T.U. adopted at the Congress in 1919. The changes affected, in the main, the composition of the Executive and General Council,<sup>3</sup> and the rights of representation accorded to the International Trade Secretariats.<sup>4</sup>

### a. *Place in the International Labour Movement*

The place of the I.F.T.U. in the international labour movement was defined in a resolution adopted at the Vienna Congress in 1924. There it was pointed out that the position of the I.F.T.U. was determined by the attitude of the national centres on principles and tactics. The common aim of the trade unions was to improve the economic and social conditions of the working class, while the struggle for political freedom was a task for the Labour parties. Nevertheless, a certain amount of political activity was necessary to the trade unions (as to the employers' organisations) but this did not mean that the unions

<sup>1</sup> *The International Trade Union Movement*, I.F.T.U., Paris, Vol. XIX, Nos. 6-7, June-July 1939, p. 203. See also Chapter VI, p. 261.

<sup>2</sup> *The International Trade Union Movement*, I.F.T.U., Paris, Vol. XIX, Nos. 1-2, January-February 1939, p. 9; Nos. 6-7, June-July 1939, p. 206.

<sup>3</sup> See below, Chapter V.

<sup>4</sup> See below, p. 159.

were at the service of a political party; they had to remain independent. They were, however, in close contact with the Labour and Socialist parties, since these were the only political parties which had supported trade union claims in the several parliaments. The Communist parties were seeking to dominate the trade unions at the orders of the Communist International; the splitting of the Labour movement in many countries, and the ensuing political and economic reaction, was mostly their work; the Red International of Labour Unions had been created by the Communist International to destroy the I.F.T.U. Against all this the trade unions were forced to take defensive measures. It was the duty of the I.F.T.U. to support the unions in their general development, as well as in the execution of the principles mentioned in the resolution. In particular, it should always strive to achieve unity for the workers all over the world.<sup>1</sup>

At the same Congress a resolution was adopted on the relations between the I.F.T.U. and the International Trade Secretariats. The resolution, which was prepared at a meeting of the Management Committee of the I.F.T.U. and representatives of the International Trade Secretariats, declared that the I.F.T.U. was to be recognised as the only international organisation of trade unions. It was also laid down that the International Trade Secretariats would not take final decisions in regard to general questions outside the domain of their respective trades, or in regard to special questions affecting the interests of other trade union organisations, without first consulting the I.F.T.U.<sup>2</sup>

#### b. *Relations with National Centres*

Relations between the I.F.T.U. and its affiliated national centres constituted one of the most important problems of internal organisation. Under the Rules of the I.F.T.U., adopted in 1919, the autonomy of the national centres was 'guaranteed'.<sup>3</sup> The problem was, as in the case of the other international organisations, to reconcile this respect for the position of the affiliated bodies in the different countries with the need for ensuring that the international decisions would be carried out. At the first post-war Congress in 1919 the question arose in an acute form in connection with the resolution on the Washington Conference. The resolution, it will be remembered, laid down

<sup>1</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1922-24*, I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1924, pp. 244, 281, 364.

<sup>2</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1922-24*, I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1924, pp. 35, 183, 235, 242, 273, 363. See also Chapter V, p. 188.

<sup>3</sup> See above, Chapter II, p. 52.



two conditions under which the unions would be prepared to be represented at Washington.<sup>1</sup> It affirmed that if these conditions were not accepted the national centres would have to abstain from participating in the Conference. The resolution further declared that its terms would be binding upon all national centres represented at Amsterdam.

These provisions were challenged by the American and British delegations, in particular. Samuel Gompers, for the Americans, asked whether the Congress was entitled to say that the national centres would not be represented under the conditions mentioned, and pointed out that the constitution safeguarded their autonomy. The Swiss spokesman said that his organisation viewed the matter from an international and not a national standpoint. The autonomy of the countries must be upheld, but this applied to national affairs and not to essentially international matters. Gompers went on to suggest the deletion of the two paragraphs. The British delegation tabled two amendments to this effect, but do not seem to have been present when the vote was taken. Both amendments were defeated as only the Americans voted in favour of them.

Gompers referred to the matter again at a meeting of members of the Bureau of the I.F.T.U. and representatives of the A.F. of L., held at Washington later in the year, when members of the Bureau attended the Washington Conference. He spoke of difficulties in the way of the affiliation of the A.F. of L. to the I.F.T.U. and said that one of them was that the Bureau was violating the autonomy of the national centres.<sup>2</sup> In practice, however, the national centres have always retained their power to decide how and to what extent they would carry out the international decisions.

As with the other international organisations the I.F.T.U. encountered the difficulty of maintaining a sufficiently close connection with its affiliated bodies in the various countries. Full Congresses were held every three years and meetings of the General Council (representing all the national centres) once a year. The Executive, which met several times annually, contained members from half a dozen countries only. In the last half of the period between the two wars, the need for more frequent meetings was felt and a resolution on this subject was carried by the Congress of 1933. The resolution referred to the increasing importance of international affairs and affirmed that the solution of various problems was being transferred to the

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 127.

<sup>2</sup> *The International Trade Union Movement, Official Organ of the I.F.T.U.*, Supplement V, April, 1922, p. 17.

international sphere. It declared that a closer and fuller contact between the I.F.T.U. and its affiliated centres might promote stronger action and greater activity, and accordingly instructed the Executive of the I.F.T.U. to call the General Council together whenever the international situation provided a suitable occasion.<sup>1</sup> Actually, special meetings of the General Council had been convened before this, and the resolution was therefore the expression of a desire rather than an instruction to break new ground. In 1933, and again in 1934, only one meeting was held but in 1935 there were two special meetings (in addition to the regular one) and both were held jointly with the Executive of the L.S.I. to discuss the Italian attack upon Abyssinia.<sup>2</sup> After this there were further special meetings to deal with the growing number of international problems.

### c. *Overseas Countries*

A great deal of attention was paid by the I.F.T.U. to the question of extending its organisation, especially to countries overseas. The first Congress in 1919 was attended by delegates from eleven European countries and the United States of America. By the time of the Rome Congress in 1922, twenty national centres from Europe had affiliated, as well as organisations in Canada, South Africa, Argentina and Peru.<sup>3</sup> The A.F. of L., however, had refused to affiliate, though it had belonged to the I.F.T.U. before 1914. Various communications had been addressed to the A.F. of L. but the relations between the two bodies had become 'as bad as could possibly be'.<sup>4</sup> During the three years before the Vienna Congress further correspondence followed and some of the misunderstandings seem to have been removed. The reports for the next two triennial periods referred to the subsequent negotiations and to the discussions at various Conventions of the A.F. of L. Apparently the two main obstacles to affiliation were expense and the American fear that the A.F. of L. would not enjoy complete autonomy under the rules of the I.F.T.U. Some years later, when the struggle against the Nazi régime in Germany provided a common interest, the A.F. of L. and the I.F.T.U. were brought

<sup>1</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1930-32*, I.F.T.U., Paris, 1934, pp. 392, 408.

<sup>2</sup> *International Federation of Trade Unions, Triennial Report, 1933-35, Congress*, London, 1936. I.F.T.U., Paris, 1937, p. 207, 208.

<sup>3</sup> *International Trade Union Movement, Official Organ of the I.F.T.U.*, Supplement V, April 1922, p. 14.

<sup>4</sup> *International Trade Union Movement, Official Organ of the I.F.T.U.*, Supplement V, April 1922, p. 17.

into closer contact, but it was not until 1937 that the A.F. of L. was received into affiliation.

Unlike the L.S.I. the I.F.T.U. made repeated approaches to overseas organisations with a view to persuading them to affiliate. The triennial reports contain accounts of the steps taken to interest the non-affiliated organisations in the Dominions, Mexico and other countries of the American Continent, Africa, India, China and Japan. A number of these bodies became affiliated as the years went by.

On various occasions special efforts were made. Thus a resolution passed by the Paris Congress in 1927 called upon the new General Council *inter alia* to report on the whole question of the organisation and the possibility of extending it. The resolution incorporated a British proposal that a sub-committee should make recommendations for increasing the number of affiliations, in order that the I.F.T.U. might become 'an organisation of universal scope and influence'.<sup>1</sup> A joint conference of the Executive of the I.F.T.U. and the General Council of the Trades Union Congress, held in London in November 1927, led to the adoption by the Executive of a further British suggestion that all the trade union centres still outside the I.F.T.U. should be approached at an early date.<sup>2</sup> Letters were accordingly sent to organisations in thirteen countries that were either sympathetic or at least not hostile to the I.F.T.U. Although there do not seem to have been any appreciable immediate results, some of these national centres, notably Finland, India, Mexico and the United States, affiliated in later years.

Further steps were recommended by the Stockholm Congress in 1930. These included an approach to eligible but unaffiliated organisations represented at the annual conference of the I.L.O. at Geneva and the despatch of a delegation to India, Japan and other countries of the Far East.<sup>3</sup> The delegation to the Far East was never sent. Although the General Council finally decided in 1931 that the delegation should go, and although preparations were made for the President, Sir Walter Citrine, and the General Secretary, Walter Schevenels, to travel in the autumn of 1932, it was ultimately agreed that the political situation in Europe and elsewhere would not permit of their absence from Europe for such a long period.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand an

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Fourth Congress of the I.F.T.U., Paris, 1927.* I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1927, pp. 91, 264.

<sup>2</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1927-30, Congress, Stockholm, 1930.* I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1931, p. 43.

<sup>3</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1927-30, Congress, Stockholm, 1930.* I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1931, pp. 310, 394.

<sup>4</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1930-32.* I.F.T.U., Paris, 1934, p. 54.

international trade union conference was duly held in Geneva in 1932. The actual business of the conference was to discuss remedies for the world economic crisis. To begin with an invitation was sent to the American Federation of Labour to attend a conference with a view to initiating common action, but as no reply was received the I.F.T.U. went ahead with its preparations for a conference in Geneva. The conference took place in April 1932 and was attended by delegates from Norway, the Irish Free State, Japan, India, Portugal, Cuba and South Africa, in addition to those from the affiliated national centres and the International Trade Secretariats.<sup>1</sup>

Renewed approaches to organisations not yet affiliated were made after a very full discussion at the London Congress in 1936. The Norwegian delegates opened a debate on the problem of promoting international trade union unity, in the course of which two points of view came into opposition. Some delegates thought that contact should be made with the Red International of Labour Unions in Moscow, while others felt that fresh efforts should be made to bring in all the unaffiliated national centres, including not only the Russian unions but those in America, the Dominions and the Far East. The matter was further debated in committee, and in the end the Congress unanimously agreed that negotiations should be opened with the national centres of America, Australia, New Zealand, the Far East, the U.S.S.R. and all other non-affiliated trade union centres, with a view to establishing a united trade union movement throughout the world.<sup>2</sup>

Two moves affecting the relation of the I.F.T.U. to overseas organisations were made by bodies other than the I.F.T.U. itself. In 1929 a proposal was made by the A.F. of L. for closer contact between the I.F.T.U. and the Pan-American Federation of Labour. The Pan-American Federation of Labour was formed in 1918 at the suggestion of Samuel Gompers and consisted of representatives of the A.F. of L. and of organisations in other American Republics. Four congresses were held before 1929, though not all of the countries of Central and South America were represented. An article by Matthew Woll, Vice-President of the A.F. of L., published in his trade union journal in June 1929, suggested that the I.F.T.U. and the Pan-American Federation of Labour should establish a mutual relationship. He claimed that the jurisdiction of the Pan-American Federation extended over the whole of the Western Hemisphere and that

<sup>1</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1930-32*. I.F.T.U., Paris, 1934, p. 114.

<sup>2</sup> *I.F.T.U., Triennial Report, 1933-35, Congress, London, 1936*. I.F.T.U., Paris, 1937, pp. 410-424, 443, 459.

the I.F.T.U. was for all practical purposes an Eastern Hemispheric labour movement. His idea was that each should recognise the supremacy of the other in its own field. On this basis of equality they could between them constitute a World Federation of Trade Unions. The idea was endorsed by the 1929 Convention of the A.F. of L., but nothing came of it. In one of his articles Matthew Woll had complained about the efforts of the I.F.T.U. to extend its influence to the New World, and pointed out that the Pan-American Federation of Labour had proclaimed a sort of international Monroe Doctrine for all the Americas. Yet within ten years the A.F. of L. itself had re-affiliated to the I.F.T.U. and Mexico had joined as well. Argentina was affiliated already. Applications from other countries had been held over because their organisations were not united national centres in the European sense of the term.<sup>1</sup>

The other move was designed to promote closer collaboration among the labour movements of the Pacific and to improve their contacts with the I.F.T.U. With these objects in view an Asiatic Labour Congress, attended by trade union representatives from India, Ceylon and Japan, was held in May 1934. The suggestion for holding the Congress originated amongst the organisations in the Far East. Although the I.F.T.U. expressed an interest in the project it neither organised the Congress nor did it send representatives to attend. It was proposed that these gatherings should be held annually and that they should lead to the formation of a 'Pan-Pacific Labour and Socialist International.' The initiative, however, was not followed up.<sup>2</sup>

#### d. *Assistance in Special Cases*

As well as seeking to extend its influence to overseas countries the I.F.T.U. attempted to develop and consolidate its organisation by assisting the unions in countries in which exceptional difficulties were encountered. This sometimes entailed helping unions already affiliated and at others encouraging the formation and growth of organisations with a view to their affiliation when they were sufficiently strong and united.

Thus in April 1926 the I.F.T.U. convened a conference in Sofia in order to promote the trade union movement in the Balkans.<sup>3</sup> A Scandinavian-Baltic Conference, held at Stockholm

<sup>1</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1927-30, Congress, Stockholm, 1930.* I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1931, p. 61.

<sup>2</sup> *International Federation of Trade Unions, Triennial Report, 1933-35, Congress, London, 1936.* I.F.T.U., Paris, 1937, p. 63.

<sup>3</sup> *International Federation of Trade Unions, Report on Activities 1924-26.* I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1927, p. 17.

in December 1926, made recommendations for promoting trade union co-operation in Scandinavia and for assisting the young trade unions of the Baltic countries.<sup>1</sup> In September 1929 the I.F.T.U. held a Conference at Luxemburg, attended by representatives of the national centres of Germany, France, Belgium and Luxemburg, to assist the Luxemburg unions in organising foreign workers. The problem arose from the fact that one-third of the workers employed in Luxemburg were foreigners, who came from a number of different countries and were particularly exposed to exploitation and reactionary influences. The Conference set up a Four-Countries Committee, which met in November 1929, and again in 1930, 1931, 1932 and 1933. It carried on its work until the destruction of the German trade unions in 1933 made it impossible to provide the necessary financial assistance any longer.<sup>2</sup>

#### e. *Underground Organisations*

Repeated efforts were made by the I.F.T.U. to keep in contact with the trade union organisations that were driven underground in Italy, Germany, Austria and other countries of the Continent. Relations with trade unionists inside those countries were maintained, partly by visits from the General Secretary and others, and partly by supporting the emigré organisations in the countries in which trade unions were still able to function. A great part of the activity of the emigrés consisted in maintaining clandestine communications with their comrades at home.

Unlike the L.S.I. the I.F.T.U. did not, as a rule, continue to provide representation on its committees for organisations that had been forced underground. An exception was made in the case of Italy. The Italian trade unions were the first to be suppressed and the Italian trade unionists abroad—notably in France and Switzerland—succeeded in re-starting an Italian Confederation of Labour with headquarters in Paris. This body was accepted into affiliation by the I.F.T.U., with the result that Italy remained in the list of affiliated organisations till 1930, and representatives of Italy attended Congresses and meetings of the General Council for some years longer.

On the other hand, when the German trade unions were suppressed in 1933 the German member of the I.F.T.U. Executive,

<sup>1</sup> *I.F.T.U. Report on Activities 1924-26*. I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1927, p. 41.

<sup>2</sup> *I.F.T.U., Triennial Report, 1933-35, Congress, London, 1936*, I.F.T.U., Paris, 1937, p. 38. *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., Congress, Stockholm, 1930*, I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1931, p. 17. *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1930-32*, I.F.T.U., Paris, 1934, p. 23.

Th. Leipart, resigned his seat and was replaced at the 1933 Congress by Johannes Schorsch, the representative of Austria.<sup>1</sup> After the destruction of the Austrian trade unions in 1934, Schorsch himself retired and the 1936 Congress elected E. Kupers of Holland to fill the vacancy.<sup>2</sup> Austria and Germany—and other countries in which the trade unions were subsequently suppressed—disappeared from the list of affiliated centres.

The effect of the practice of denying representation to emigré organisations and underground groups was that responsibility for the policy and administration of the I.F.T.U. was kept in the hands of the unions that were able to function legally in their respective countries.

There was also the problem of assisting the trade unions in countries where the movement was menaced by dictatorship but not yet actually suppressed. A discussion took place on this subject at the Stockholm Congress in 1930, i.e., long before Hitler's rise to power in Germany. The basis for the discussion was an address by George Hicks, one of the representatives of the British T.U.C., which recalled a resolution of the Vienna Congress of 1924 in support of the Italian trade unions. After a unanimous decision in committee the Stockholm Congress unanimously passed a resolution affirming that complete democracy is essential for the trade union movement and repudiating all forms of dictatorship. The resolution called upon the I.F.T.U. and all its affiliated organisations to support energetically the workers' resistance in countries in which there was an acute danger of Fascism; to help the victims of reaction and dictatorship materially and morally, for example, by supporting the Matteotti Fund;<sup>3</sup> to assist in rehabilitating the free trade unions and restoring democratic rights in the countries governed by dictatorships; to conduct vigorous propaganda for democracy, and so on.<sup>4</sup>

In accordance with this decision action was taken in support of the organisations in, for example, Spain and the countries of the Baltic. Again, after Hitler's accession to power in Germany the trade unions in the Saar decided to set up a new organisation rather than fall into line with the German Labour Front. Their organisation was accepted into affiliation by the I.F.T.U., and received both moral and financial support until the Saar plebiscite in January 1935 led to the re-incorporation of the

<sup>1</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1930-32*, I.F.T.U., Paris, 1934, pp. 387, 389.

<sup>2</sup> *I.F.T.U., Triennial Report, 1933-35, Congress, London, 1936*. I.F.T.U. Paris, 1937, p. 450.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter III, p. 90.

<sup>4</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1927-30, Congress, Stockholm, 1930*. I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1931, pp. 301, 323, 371, 392.

territory into Germany.<sup>1</sup> A similar position arose in Danzig, where a new national centre was formed in January 1935. This body, too, became affiliated to the I.F.T.U. and was given the backing of the International in the long struggle of the Danzig Labour movement against the attempts of the Nazis to gain complete control over the Free City.<sup>2</sup>

#### *f. Relations with Russian Organisations*

A special problem of organisation was that of the attitude to be adopted towards the trade unions in Russia and towards the Red International of Labour Unions. At the initial Congress of the I.F.T.U. in 1919 a resolution was passed affirming that one of the first tasks of the Bureau of the I.F.T.U. should be to investigate the trade union position in Russia, so that the national centres might decide with full knowledge of the facts how best to help the Russian trade union movement.<sup>3</sup> This desire to understand and support the trade unions in Russia was hampered by the activities of the Red International of Labour Unions and of the Communist trade unions in various countries. Complaints about the Red International of Labour Unions were expressed in the report to the Second Congress in 1922. The report pointed out that in its efforts to promote unity the I.F.T.U. had not failed to approach the organised workers in Russia but claimed that these attempts had proved abortive because the leaders of the Communist International had deliberately fought the I.F.T.U. from the outset. This was very clearly revealed, said the report, when the Red International of Labour Unions was formed in Moscow in opposition to the I.F.T.U. The I.F.T.U. could have done very much to help the Russian workers, but its attempts to establish unity, or to promote joint action, had been met by a repudiation of the right of the I.F.T.U. to exist.<sup>4</sup>

The report to the next Congress in 1924 referred to the removal of misunderstandings between the I.F.T.U. and the American unions and regretted that similar results had not been obtained in the case of Russia. A distinction was made between the Red International of Labour Unions and the All-Russian Trade Union Council. The differences between the Russian

<sup>1</sup> *I.F.T.U., Triennial Report, 1933-35, Congress, London, 1936.* I.F.T.U., Paris, 1937, p. 33.

<sup>2</sup> *I.F.T.U., Triennial Report, 1933-35, Congress, London, 1936.* I.F.T.U., Paris, 1937, p. 35.

<sup>3</sup> *The International Trade Union Movement, Official Organ of the I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, Supplement II, July 1921, p. 53.*

<sup>4</sup> *The International Trade Union Movement, Official Organ of the I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, Supplement V, April 1922, p. 71.*



unions and those of other countries would never have prevented the I.F.T.U. from doing all in its power to promote a rapprochement, said the report. But although the I.F.T.U. thus unreservedly recognised the right of the Russian trade union movement to determine its own policy, it could not admit that there was any justification for the existence of the Red International of Labour Unions. This body had been formed 'for the sole purpose of fighting the International Federation of Trade Unions'. It had repeatedly approached the I.F.T.U. with proposals for joint action, but the I.F.T.U. took the view that the programme of the Red International of Labour Unions, which contained clauses definitely directed against the I.F.T.U., precluded the possibility of common action, and that in such circumstances co-operation with Moscow would destroy the work of the I.F.T.U. and end in the disruption of the trade union movement. On the other hand, the Russian unions had been invited to join forces with the I.F.T.U., and the Management Committee of the I.F.T.U. had confirmed its willingness to enter into negotiations with their representatives. The Russians, however, had stood by the proposals for joint action; they were not prepared to throw in their lot with the I.F.T.U.

In spite of this, Fred Bramley, for the British T.U.C., suggested at the Congress in 1924, that the negotiations with the Russian unions should be continued, and a resolution to this effect was carried.<sup>1</sup> This resolution was communicated to Moscow, but although a long correspondence ensued the two sides were not brought any closer together. The Russians expressed their desire for a single trade union international, but were not willing to achieve that desire by affiliating to the I.F.T.U. On the other hand, the I.F.T.U. declared its willingness to admit the Russian trade union centre on the same conditions as those in force for all the other affiliated organisations. The British T.U.C. was prominent in its efforts to promote better relations, by keeping the question before the I.F.T.U. and by joining with the Russians in forming an Anglo-Russian Joint Advisory Council.<sup>2</sup> The conditions for real unity, however, never existed. In summing up the correspondence and discussions the report to the 1927 Congress affirmed that it could only spell calamity for the I.F.T.U. 'if the admission of the Russians, instead of leading to sincere co-operation with the other national

<sup>1</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1922-24*. I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1924, pp. 16, 85, 227, 260, 366.

<sup>2</sup> *Report of the 56th Annual Trades Union Congress, Hull, 1924*, pp. 224, 246, 311, 395. *Report of the 57th Annual Trades Union Congress, Scarborough, 1925*, p. 297. *Report of the 58th Annual Trades Union Congress, Bournemouth, 1926*, pp. 245, 437.

trade union centres, should prove to be nothing more than the outcome of a desire to ram Russian policy down the throats of the other National Centres'. The I.F.T.U. and its affiliated centres were striving for genuine unity, said the report, and added, 'So long as the Russians do not desire this genuine unity and do not recognise the autonomy of the National Centres their efforts are foredoomed to failure.'<sup>1</sup>

The Russian question was mentioned at the 1927 Congress in the discussion on the report, but no special steps were taken to carry the matter further. A British proposal for the appointment of a small committee to study the question of increasing the number of affiliated bodies was carried,<sup>2</sup> and it was understood that the Russian problem was to be one of the subjects for the committee to examine.<sup>3</sup> No progress could be reported to the 1930 Congress, however, and after 1930 the familiar chapter on 'Amsterdam-Moscow' was dropped from the reports.<sup>4</sup> After Hitler's seizure of power in 1933 the question arose again in connection with proposals for the formation of a united front against Fascism. The Russians renewed their suggestions for joint action, but the General Council of the I.F.T.U. regarded their approaches as insincere manœuvres. The desire to frustrate the Italian attack upon Abyssinia in 1935 provided a renewed incentive for those who wanted an understanding with the Russians. The French and Norwegian trade unions, in particular, strongly advocated negotiations, and a full-dress debate took place at the London Congress in 1936. A Norwegian motion was moved suggesting that negotiations be opened with the Russian trade union centre and the Red International of Labour Unions 'for trade union concentration or collaboration', but as already stated<sup>5</sup> a resolution was unanimously carried in favour of negotiations with all unaffiliated centres and not merely with the Russians.<sup>6</sup>

Nevertheless, the Russian problem continued to occupy the I.F.T.U. till the outbreak of war. Copies of the London resolution were sent to the Russian trade unions, as to the other unaffiliated national centres, but no reply had been received from Russia by the time of the next General Council meeting in

<sup>1</sup> I.F.T.U., *Report on Activities 1924-26*. I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1927, pp. 43-58.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 134.

<sup>3</sup> *Proceedings of Fourth Congress of I.F.T.U., 1927*. I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1927, pp. 41, 46, 264.

<sup>4</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U. 1927-30, Congress, Stockholm, 1930*. I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1931, p. 69.

<sup>5</sup> See above, p. 135.

<sup>6</sup> I.F.T.U., *Triennial Report, 1933-35, Congress, London, 1936*. I.F.T.U., Paris, 1937, pp. 160, 380, 410, 411, 422, 443, 459.

1937.<sup>1</sup> The General Council decided, however, that a further communication should be sent, with the result that the Russians agreed to negotiate. A delegation consisting of Walter Schevenels (General Secretary), Georg Stolz (Assistant Secretary), and Léon Jouhaux (France) accordingly visited Moscow in November 1937, only to be met with a series of conditions which the Russians desired the I.F.T.U. to fulfil before they would apply for affiliation. At the General Council meeting in Oslo in 1938 a very full debate resulted in a decision by 14 votes to 7 that no further negotiations should be conducted.<sup>2</sup> The British delegation at the Zurich Congress in 1939, however, moved that a further invitation be sent to the Russian trade unions 'to affiliate on the basis of the Statutes and Rules of the I.F.T.U.'. Again there was a lengthy discussion, but the British motion was defeated by 46 votes to 37. Thereupon the Congress decided by 60 votes to 5, with 18 abstentions, to confirm the decision taken at Oslo the year before.<sup>3</sup> When war broke out two months later the I.F.T.U. was as far away from unity with the Russian trade unions as it had ever been.

### 3. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Alongside its work in the spheres of policy and organisation the I.F.T.U., of course, conducted other forms of activity. Reference has already been made in Chapter II to its work on behalf of women and young workers, which was carried on through the International Committee of Trade Union Women and the International Committee of the I.F.T.U. for Youth and Educational Questions. Another activity should be mentioned—the financial support provided for trade unions engaged in industrial disputes, for workers in countries suffering acute economic distress, and for the labour movement in countries without democracy.

#### a. *Relief Work*

A paragraph in the programme adopted at the first Congress in 1919 provided that appeals might be made 'for combined assistance in case of need'.<sup>4</sup> The report to the second Congress

<sup>1</sup> *The International Trade Union Movement*, Vol. XVIII, Nos. 1-7, I.F.T.U., Paris, January-July 1937, pp. 9, 43.

<sup>2</sup> *The International Trade Union Movement*, I.F.T.U., Paris, Vol. XVIII, Nos. 3-5, March-May 1938, pp. 24, 54.

<sup>3</sup> *The International Trade Union Movement*, I.F.T.U., Paris, Vol. XIX, Nos. 6-7, June-July 1939, pp. 196, 205.

<sup>4</sup> *The International Trade Union Movement*, *Official Organ of the I.F.T.U.*, Amsterdam, Supplement II, July 1921, p. 35.

in 1922 recalled that action was taken at an early date to help the workers in Austria and Russia. Before the end of 1919, in fact, the I.F.T.U. had started a relief campaign on behalf of the Austrian workers, who were threatened with intense suffering as a result of their country's disastrous economic situation. Sums of money were raised in Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Holland, Italy, Luxemburg, Norway and Sweden, and trains of foodstuffs were sent to Austria, where they were distributed by the trade union and co-operative societies. In addition, the trade unions of Denmark, Sweden and Holland arranged for many hundreds of under-nourished Austrian children to visit their countries and regain their health. A relief action on similar lines was started on behalf of the Russian workers in August 1921. Funds totalling over a million Dutch florins were raised by the national centres before the end of the year, with the result that several shiploads of food, clothing and medicine were despatched to Russia during the winter.<sup>1</sup> Ultimately, the fund was brought up to a total of over two million florins.<sup>2</sup>

During the same period efforts were made to assist the trade unions in Germany. This was not a case of relieving hunger and want among the workers but of coming to the assistance of the unions themselves. The income of the German trade unions had fallen heavily as a result of the depreciation of the currency and in 1923 their position became desperate. There was, indeed, a danger that the German trade unions might collapse under the strain. Towards the end of the year, therefore, the I.F.T.U. sent out an appeal for help. Contributions were received from a number of the national centres, and also from the majority of the International Trade Secretariats, and the total raised was in the neighbourhood of half a million Dutch florins.<sup>3</sup>

In later years financial assistance was given to a number of other organisations. These included the national centres in countries such as Bulgaria, Egypt, Estonia, Greece, India, Lithuania, and Yugoslavia, and the Italian national centre in Paris. Grants were made in such cases to assist in the development and consolidation of the trade unions, as the national centres were financially weak.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The International Trade Union Movement, Official Organ of the I.F.T.U.*, Amsterdam, Supplement V, April 1922, pp. 51, 55.

<sup>2</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1922-24*, I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1924, p. 77.

<sup>3</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1922-24*, I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1924, p. 69.

<sup>4</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1930-32*, I.F.T.U., Paris, 1934, p. 22. *I.F.T.U. Triennial Report, 1933-35, Congress, London, 1936*. I.F.T.U., Paris, 1937, p. 38.

## b. *Industrial Disputes*

Financial assistance for unions involved in industrial disputes was principally a matter for the International Trade Secretariats. Industrial disputes most often occur in a single trade or industry, and if international aid is given to unions engaged in strikes or lock-outs the appropriate International Trade Secretariat is usually the proper channel. Sometimes, however, a dispute occurs on such a scale as to call for assistance from the international trade union movement as a whole. In such instances action has been taken from time to time by the I.F.T.U.

Three such cases arose during 1925 and 1926. Before then the I.F.T.U. had sent help to the workers in Austria, Russia and Germany to meet difficulties caused by economic conditions, but now it was called upon to support national centres in strikes and lock-outs. In Denmark, for example, 125,000 workers, the majority of whom belonged to the national centre, were locked out in 1925. An appeal was launched by the Executive of the I.F.T.U. with the result that a sum of over two million Dutch florins was raised by various national centres, International Trade Secretariats and individual unions. In the same year an appeal was received from the All-India Trade Union Congress on behalf of the cotton workers in Bombay, who had struck against a proposed reduction in wages. The strike involved 150,000 men. Although the Indian trade unions were not affiliated to the I.F.T.U. the Executive decided to support the appeal and a sum of 33,000 Dutch florins was contributed.<sup>1</sup>

A bigger dispute was the national strike in Britain during 1926. In this case, too, support was organised by the I.F.T.U. A total of 472,000 Dutch florins was raised in aid of the strike fund, and a further 1,600,000 florins for the relief of the miners in the long struggle which followed. In addition a loan of nearly 950,000 florins was raised to help the T.U.C. meet the difficulties left over from the stoppage.<sup>2</sup>

At the Paris Congress in 1927 new regulations were adopted for international assistance in strikes and lock-outs. A paper submitted by Johann Sassenbach, one of the secretaries, emphasised that appeals for international support should emanate only from national centres and not from individual organisations, except in the case of appeals to unions in the same trade abroad, which should be addressed to the appropriate International Trade Secretariat. Sassenbach recalled that as far back as 1911

<sup>1</sup> *I.F.T.U. Report on Activities, 1924-26*. I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1927, pp. 59, 61.

<sup>2</sup> *I.F.T.U. Report on Activities, 1924-26*. I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1927, p. 63.

the possibility of forming an international strike fund had been considered and rejected by the International Trade Union Congress in Budapest. He questioned whether the time for such a fund had even yet arrived and put forward a set of draft regulations for raising contributions in approved cases, on the lines of the principles laid down by the Budapest Congress. A commission of the Paris Congress, which examined these proposals, took account of the development of employers' associations and international cartels and decided that the financial strength of these organisations obliged the workers to organise international assistance through the national centres. They recommended Sassenbach's proposals, with a few slight alterations.

In their final form, as unanimously adopted by the Congress, the regulations specified that in cases calling for the assistance of all the organised workers of a country, only the national centre should issue an appeal, while in important cases affecting a single trade or industry the appeal could be made to an International Trade Secretariat. An international relief action could only be initiated by the I.F.T.U. if several unions in a country were simultaneously involved in economic disputes of such an extent that the necessary funds could not be raised either in the country itself or by the International Trade Secretariat to which the unions were affiliated.<sup>1</sup>

### *c. International Solidarity Fund*

Finally, there were the cases in which the I.F.T.U. gave assistance to the Labour movement in countries governed or threatened by dictatorships, first through the Matteotti Fund and later through the International Solidarity Fund. An account of these activities has already been given.<sup>2</sup>

## WORK OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE SECRETARIATS

Although the International Trade Secretariats are concerned primarily with the affairs of their respective trades and industries, they have to play their part in the work of the international labour movement in general. Great importance attaches therefore to their relations with one another and with the I.F.T.U.

When the International Trade Secretariats were re-started after the war of 1914-1918 it was evident that they would represent a greater number of organised workers than before. The

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings of Fourth Congress of I.F.T.U., 1927.* I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1927, pp. 62, 165, 273.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter III, p. 90.

I.F.T.U., which was itself reconstituted in 1919, kept in close touch with them from the beginning. Conferences of no less than twelve of the Trade Secretariats were held in Amsterdam—the headquarters of the I.F.T.U.—between August 1919 and March 1921, and most of these were attended by representatives of the I.F.T.U. The I.F.T.U. was also represented at three of the Conferences which were held in other centres. By the end of 1921 there were twenty-nine International Trade Secretariats in existence, with a total membership of over 21,000,000.<sup>1</sup>

In its report to the second Congress of the I.F.T.U. in 1922, the Management Committee of the I.F.T.U. reported that it had been considering how to foster closer relations with the Trade Secretariats and how to ensure that the unions included in the affiliated national centres also became affiliated to the Trade Secretariats for their respective crafts or industries. They had decided to ask the Congress to agree that there should be joint annual conferences of secretaries of the Trade Secretariats and the I.F.T.U. The Management Committee agreed that the Trade Secretariats should have complete freedom of action but thought that there should be a guarantee of co-operation for any measures undertaken by the I.F.T.U. itself. As a matter of fact, this co-operation had been forthcoming on all important matters up to that time.<sup>2</sup>

A ruling on both these questions was given by the Rome Congress in 1922, which declared (a) that each national trade union should be affiliated both to its own national centre and to the International Trade Secretariat catering for its industry or craft; and (b) that with a view to achieving unity of policy and action the Bureau of the I.F.T.U. should convene special conferences with the Secretaries of the International Trade Secretariats when necessary. A special conference was accordingly held while the Rome Congress was meeting. There two important decisions were reached: first, 'that the International Trade Secretariats should not have legislative powers, but should only be concerned with the practical application of decisions taken in connection with general international actions'; and, secondly, 'that, consequently, there is no necessity to grant them the right of voting at the International Trade Union Congresses but that in future they should continue to attend in an advisory capacity'.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For membership of the I.F.T.U. itself see Chapter II, p. 52.

<sup>2</sup> *The International Trade Union Movement, Official Organ of the I.F.T.U.*, Amsterdam, Supplement V, April 1922, p. 22.

<sup>3</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1922-24*, I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1924, p. 35.

## I. FIELD OF ACTIVITY

Meanwhile the Trade Secretariats had settled down to their work in their own particular sphere. Their aim was to improve conditions for the workers in their respective industries by international action. That is the reason for their existence. The unions representing transport workers, miners, metal workers and others felt that they could raise the standards of wages and general conditions of employment in their own industries by forming international organisations for themselves, though experience showed that co-operation between these organisations and with the I.F.T.U. was necessary if there was to be an advance all along the line. It is significant, however, that this co-operation stopped short of the complete amalgamation of all these units into one common force. Although consultation and joint action increased as the years went by, the international organisations for the different trades continued to exist side by side with the I.F.T.U., which was responsible for the decisions on matters of general concern.

An explanation of this division of functions was given in the first report of the International Federation of Building and Wood Workers, which was formed by an amalgamation of the secretariats for the wood workers and building workers in 1934. 'It is not the task of our International Federation of Building and Wood Workers to dabble in those big questions of policy which are, properly speaking, the preserve of the wider Labour Movement,' said the report. 'As a Trade International our prime concern is, for the furtherance of the *trade* interests common to all building workers and all wood workers throughout the world, to unite all the organisations for both these groups coming within the category of "free" trade unions for the achievement of a real international collaboration—a collaboration which can only be suitably fostered within the strong, well-founded framework of an organisation possessing the indispensable technical equipment for this. This naturally by no means signifies that our International does not, in its own field and with its own weapons, carry on the fight against Fascism and war. On the contrary, we look upon this fight as one of our most important tasks, and we carry it on ourselves in the small things, just as in the large we support the campaigns of the I.F.T.U.'<sup>1</sup>

There are, of course, great differences in the technical problems of labour in the various industries. While it is possible to press for a general rise in the wage level, a general reduction in

<sup>1</sup> *The International Federation of Building and Wood Workers during the years 1934, 1935.* I.B.W.W., Amsterdam, June 1936, p. 55.



the length of the working day, a general improvement in the provisions for safety and welfare, a general advance in the sphere of social legislation and so on, it is also necessary to express these demands in specific terms for each industry. This is one of the tasks of the International Trade Secretariats, composed as they are of unions from different countries but concerned with the same trade or industry.

Not only do conditions vary from one industry to another, but they also vary from one country to another within an industry. When dealing with wages it is not merely a question of, say, endeavouring to establish a bed-rock minimum for all workers in a country, or for all countries in general. Consideration must also be given to the methods and practices in the different trades. In the case of the docks industry there is the problem of how to provide a weekly wage for casual workers, in the hotel and restaurant trade the question of tips arises, and in the fishing industry account must be taken of the widespread system of basing at least a part of the fisherman's wage on a share in the proceeds from the sale of the catch. When considering how to reduce the hours of labour it is necessary to deal with the special problems of, say, miners, who have a long distance to cover between the pit-head and the part of the pit where they actually work, or seamen, who cannot go home at the end of the day when their ship is at sea and who have quite different duties to perform when she is in port, or bakers, who want to abolish nightwork, or land workers, whose work varies with the seasons. All this is complicated by the differences between country and country.

## 2. EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION

An important part of the work of the Trade Secretariats, therefore, has been the exchange of information that took place regarding the conditions and practices in the various countries. Before the war most of the Trade Secretariats maintained their own staffs and regularly collected information and statistics relating to their respective industries. They published journals or circulars and were accustomed to issue periodical bulletins or press reports. When important issues arose it was possible for them to initiate special enquiries amongst their affiliated organisations. In some cases they published books or pamphlets on subjects connected with the various industries and trades.

This information was often more detailed and more technical than that which was published by the I.F.T.U. It related to such questions as wages, hours of work, methods of production,

trade practices, collective agreements, the causes and results of disputes, the state of trade and the level of employment. These things varied from industry to industry and from one country to another. Accurate information on them was essential if general programmes were to be translated into specific provisions adapted to the circumstances of a given industry.

A clearer idea of the kind of material that was handled may be gained by a reference to some of the reports on activities. The report of the International Transportworkers' Federation for the years 1935-1937, presented to the last pre-war Congress of the I.T.F. in 1938, detailed the reports prepared and information supplied to the affiliated unions. It pointed out that the Research Department of the I.T.F. had been developed and reorganised, that the library of 3,800 volumes was being extended, and that the office was receiving some 400 newspapers and periodicals in twenty languages—at the rate of some 1,200 issues a month.

A 'Press Report', containing notes on the activities of the I.T.F. and the affiliated unions appeared fortnightly in five languages. Technical supplements devoted to the various sections of transport workers, a supplement on 'News of the Unions', and special editorials were also included. A start had been made with the publication of a 'Joint Press Report' by the I.T.F. and the International Mercantile Marine Officers' Association, containing items of interest to merchant navy officers and seamen. Numerous communiqués on current topics had been issued to the press. A fortnightly bulletin entitled 'Fascism' had been published in six languages. The principal articles and notices from the 'Press Report' and 'Fascism' had been reprinted in an Esperanto monthly.

Special publications had included a report by the Assistant General Secretary on a journey through Spain during the civil war, a memorandum on the co-ordination of transport, reports for conferences on the coasting trade, on new methods of railway operation and on the hours of work of motor drivers, three new issues of a series of documents on the wages and conditions of railwaymen in different countries, and a comprehensive address book.

Surveys of the organisation and activities of the I.T.F. had been supplied to other bodies for inclusion in reference books. Information had been furnished to affiliated unions and others on such questions as the history of the I.T.F., the measures taken in different countries to deal with the competition between rail and road transport, plans for the co-ordination of transport, and so on. Articles on transport questions had been supplied

to journals in various countries, and material on general subjects had been supplied to transport workers' organisations on request.

Special material had also been prepared for the different sections of the I.T.F.—railwaymen, tramwaymen, motor drivers, dockers and seamen. Some of this had been published in the 'Press Report' and some supplied for the use of individual unions. Examples from a long list of subjects included the wages and conditions of Russian railwaymen, the finances of the German state railways, Diesel-engine traction in Denmark, automatic coupling, skin diseases among locomotivemen, modern accessories on the British railways, hours of work of shunting staffs, train staffs and locomotivemen in different countries, service rosters, working conditions of sleeping and restaurant-car employees, the guard's responsibility for the safety of trains on the line, accident compensation for motor drivers, premiums paid to motor drivers in Holland and Belgium for freedom from accidents, exhaustion and drowsiness as they affect traffic accidents in the United States, dockers' wages in different countries, methods of loading and unloading coal, the organisation of work in ports in various countries, shipping subsidies, seamen's wages, manning scales, the duties of wireless operators and the conditions of employment of fishermen.<sup>1</sup>

Few of the International Trade Secretariats had such a wide range of interests as the I.T.F., but they all had to deal in similar ways with the specialised subjects of their respective trades. The I.B.W.W., for instance, regarded its bulletin strictly as a 'trade information paper'. It pointed out that the publications of the I.F.T.U. and other bodies contained abundant information on general matters. The aim of the I.B.W.W., on the other hand, was to report on everything of importance affecting the trade union life of building workers and wood workers and, in addition, to give adequate information on matters affecting the trade.<sup>2</sup>

The reports of the International Trade Secretariats contained not only descriptions of the work of the international organisations as such, but also surveys of the activities of the affiliated unions. Take, for instance, the report which was submitted to the International Metal Workers' Congress in Prague in 1938—the last Congress before the war. This volume contained reports by the secretary of the International Metal Workers' Federation and by the affiliated organisations, covering the period 1934-

<sup>1</sup> *Report on Activities and Financial Report of the I.T.F. for the years 1935, 1936 and 1937*, I.T.F., Amsterdam, July 1938.

<sup>2</sup> *The International Federation of Building and Wood Workers during the years 1934, 1935*. I.B.W.W., Amsterdam, June 1936, p. 61.

1938. The Secretary's report included sections on the American iron and steel industry, on Austria, Germany, Italy and Japan, with special reference to the position of the metal workers in those countries, and on international cartels in the iron and steel industry.

The reports of the national organisations dealt with the economic situation of the metal workers, the state of employment in the iron and steel industry, wages and hours, social legislation and so on. Examples of matters referred to in these reports were a Government enquiry into the possibility of reducing hours of work for metal workers in Belgium, the increased production and export of iron and steel in Czechoslovakia, the importance of collective agreements for metal workers in Denmark, the various methods adopted for applying the 40-hour week in the metal industry in France, the effect of the sliding scale on metal workers' wages in Great Britain, and the operation of the first collective agreements in the heavy industries in Luxemburg.<sup>1</sup>

### 3. FORMULATION OF POLICY

To deal with these problems the International Trade Secretariats held their own meetings and conferences. Here again, it is possible to select a few examples from the reports. During the years 1933-1936 (i.e. the period before the last International Factory Workers' Congress), there were four meetings of the Executive Committee of the International Federation of General Factory Workers at which consideration was given not only to the general situation and the usual reports, but also to such matters as the strike in the Belgian match factories of the Swedish Trust in 1933, the movement for a reduction of working hours in margarine, oil and soap works and in the chemical industry, the situation of the affiliated unions in Finland and France, and the sending of a delegation to the Soviet Union to study the conditions of factory workers there.<sup>2</sup>

Again, during the period before its last Congress the I.T.F. held various special conferences in addition to the normal meetings of its General Council, Executive Committee and Management Committee. These included an International Railwaymen's Conference at Paris in 1936 to draw up international guiding principles on such subjects as motor and electric traction, Diesel-

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Secretary and the National Organisations 1934-38 to the Fourteenth International Metal Workers' Congress, Prague, 1938.* International Metal Workers' Federation, Berne.

<sup>2</sup> *Third Year Book, Part I, Report on Activities for the years 1933-36,* International Federation of General Factory Workers, Amsterdam, 1937, p. 12.

electric trains and the one-man control of rail cars; two conferences on coastwise shipping in 1936 and 1937, attended by representatives of dockers and seamen; joint meetings with the International Mercantile Marine Officers' Association in 1935 and 1936 to consider I.L.O. business; a conference of the seamen's section in 1936 to discuss the policy to be pursued at the Maritime Session of the International Labour Conference at Geneva; and an International Sea Fishermen's Conference in 1938.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to gatherings such as these there were also the full Congresses which each of the International Trade Secretariats held every two or three years to survey progress and determine the main lines of their policy.

#### 4. I.L.O.

Action was taken to carry out the policy agreed upon—either by the affiliated unions in their respective countries or by the committees and officers of the trade secretariats themselves. Sometimes there were consultations between trade secretariats interested in related subjects. An important part of this international action on wages and conditions was, of course, carried on in connection with the I.L.O. Efforts were made, for example, to secure the adoption of Draft Conventions and Recommendations by the International Labour Conferences at Geneva. Material was prepared for the guidance of the delegates to the Conferences, sometimes preparatory meetings were held to enable the affiliated unions from different countries to agree on the proposals to be recommended, and sometimes meetings of workers' delegates to the International Labour Conference, together with representatives of the International Trade Secretariats concerned, were held at Geneva while the Conference was actually in session.<sup>2</sup>

Most of the International Trade Secretariats, in fact, were directly concerned, at some time or another, with these activities. Thus the subjects which interested the I.T.F. included the marking of the weight on heavy packages transported by water, the safety of dockers when loading and unloading ships, and the Draft Conventions and Recommendations applying to the

<sup>1</sup> *Report on Activities and Financial Report of the I.T.F. for the years 1935, 1936 and 1937*, I.T.F., Amsterdam, July 1938, pp. 66, 87, 103.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, the description of the action taken by the I.B.W.W. in regard to the reduction in the hours of work, in the *International Federation of Building and Wood Workers during the years 1934, 1935*. I.B.W.W., Amsterdam, June 1936, p. 66.

mercantile marine.<sup>1</sup> The building and wood workers followed up such problems as the reduction of hours of work in building and civil engineering, the prevention of accidents in the building industry, and the question of compensation for occupational diseases contracted by building and wood workers.<sup>2</sup> Action was taken at Geneva by the Trade Secretariats of the miners, textile workers, clerical workers, glass workers and others in relation to the reduction in the hours of work, by the food and drink workers regarding night work in bakeries, by the painters in regard to the use of white lead, by the land workers in connection with workmen's compensation, and so on.

But the Trade Secretariats do not confine themselves entirely to matters relating to their own industries. Their particular work has to be carried on against a wider background. While attempting to improve conditions in their own trades they also take part in the general activities of the trade union movement on such subjects as rationalisation, unemployment, social insurance, industrial accidents and diseases, protective legislation, problems of young workers, women and home workers, hours of work, and holidays with pay.

## 5. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mutual aid in strikes and lock-outs, and assistance to unions in countries governed or menaced by dictatorships are also amongst the activities of the Trade Secretariats. The provisions of their rules relating to strikes and lock-outs were referred to in Chapter II.<sup>3</sup> Considerable sums were in fact raised at various times to assist unions involved in large-scale industrial disputes, and contributions were also provided for the support of the organisations in the countries without democracy. The problem of raising funds for the latter purpose was one of the questions which came up for discussion between the Trade Secretariats and the I.F.T.U. When appeals were made for donations in the various countries it was a question whether the trade unions should send their remittances to their respective national centres, and thus to the I.F.T.U., or whether they should forward them direct to the appropriate Trade Secretariats.<sup>4</sup> In regard to strikes

<sup>1</sup> *Report on Activities and Financial Report of the I.T.F. for the years 1935, 1936 and 1937.* I.T.F., Amsterdam, July 1938, pp. 86, 94, 106.

<sup>2</sup> *The International Federation of Building and Wood Workers during the years 1934, 1935.* I.B.W.W., Amsterdam, June 1936, pp. 65-69.

<sup>3</sup> Chapter II, p. 59.

<sup>4</sup> See above, p. 144.

*The International Federation of Building and Wood Workers during the years 1934, 1935.* I.B.W.W., Amsterdam, June 1936, p. 73.

*Report on Activities and Financial Report of the I.T.F. for the years 1935, 1936 and 1937.* I.T.F., Amsterdam, July 1938, p. 38.

and lock-outs some of the Trade Secretariats considered the possibility of building up international strike funds. One of these was the International Federation of General Factory Workers, which went fully into the matter over a period of years. Its Congress at Hanover in 1929 turned down the idea of an international strike fund but it instructed the Executive Committee to prepare a report for the next Congress on the best method of raising financial aid for unions involved in strikes. In its report to the Prague Congress in 1933 the Executive pointed out that the principle of an international strike fund had only been applied, to a very limited degree, in the case of the Textile Workers' International. The Executive was thereupon instructed by the Congress to make a new enquiry. It came to the conclusion, however, that the formation of a standing fund would involve an increase in affiliation fees which the affiliated unions would not be prepared to face, and it therefore decided that it would be best to continue to rely on 'the voluntary solidarity of the affiliated organisations'.<sup>1</sup> This, indeed, was the general practice of the Trade Secretariats, which appealed to the unions in the various countries for donations from time to time as the need arose.

## 6. ORGANISATION

Problems of organisation encountered by the International Trade Secretariats included the securing of new affiliations, the amalgamation of Secretariats in kindred trades, the development of co-operation between Secretariats, the promotion of unity with the organisations in the Soviet Union and the regulation of relations with the I.F.T.U.

### a. *Extension*

It will be remembered that the Rome Congress of the I.F.T.U. in 1922 expressed the view that each national trade union should, as a matter of course, be affiliated both to its national centre and to the appropriate International Trade Secretariat.<sup>2</sup> At a Conference of the I.F.T.U. Executive and the International Trade Secretariats in Paris in 1927 it was agreed to recommend that 'the national centres should do all they can to secure the affiliation of the unions belonging to them to the International Trade Secretariats'.<sup>3</sup> This resolution was endorsed by the Con-

<sup>1</sup> *Third Year Book, Part I, Report of Activities for the years 1933-36*, International Federation of General Factory Workers, Amsterdam, 1937, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 146.

<sup>3</sup> *Proceedings of Fourth Congress of I.F.T.U., 1927*. I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1927, p. 206.

gress of the I.F.T.U. a few days later and the I.F.T.U. Executive drew the attention of the national centres to the matter. Most of the national centres sent in replies for the guidance of the Trade Secretariats and it was established that a 'steady movement' in the direction of the affiliation of all I.F.T.U. organisations with the Trade Secretariats was taking place. It seemed that the percentage of members of unions affiliated to national centres but not to Trade Secretariats at the beginning of 1928 was 7.5—less than half the figure for 1924.<sup>1</sup> Further progress was made during the next three years.<sup>2</sup>

One of the rules of the I.F.T.U.—adopted at Stockholm in 1930—contained a provision that unions connected with International Secretariats and belonging to national centres not affiliated with the I.F.T.U. should use their influence with these bodies to secure their affiliation to the I.F.T.U. At the suggestion of the Trade Secretariats a reciprocal obligation was imposed upon the national centres in 1936 by the addition of a provision that these bodies should urge any of their constituent unions not yet affiliated with the appropriate Trade Secretariat to become affiliated.<sup>3</sup> The great problem remained, however, of securing new affiliations from countries whose national centres were not yet associated with the I.F.T.U., and particularly from countries overseas. Here, too, a certain advance was recorded.<sup>4</sup>

#### b. *Amalgamation*

From 1922 onwards several amalgamations took place. In 1922, there were 29 International Trade Secretariats recognised by the I.F.T.U. The Potters' and Carpenters' Secretariats, however, amalgamated with the Building Workers, and the Furriers with the Clothing Workers. Meanwhile, a new Teachers' Secretariat was established in 1926, so that by the time of the Paris Congress of the I.F.T.U. in 1927 the number of Secretariats was 27. Plans for the amalgamation of several other Trade Secretariats were under discussion during the period 1927-1939, and the I.F.T.U. Executive supported these efforts in accordance with a decision of the 1930 Congress.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1927-30, Congress, Stockholm, 1930.* I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1931, p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1930-32.* I.F.T.U., Paris, 1934, p. 46.

<sup>3</sup> *I.F.T.U., Triennial Report, 1933-35, Congress, London, 1936.* I.F.T.U., Paris, 1937, p. 443.

<sup>4</sup> See above, p. 133. See also the account of the propaganda activities of the I.B.W.W. *The International Federation of Building and Wood Workers during the years 1934, 1935.* I.B.W.W., Amsterdam, June 1936, p. 53.

<sup>5</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1927-30, Congress, Stockholm, 1930.* I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1931, p. 30. *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1930-32.* I.F.T.U., Paris, 1934, p. 46. *Third Year Book, Part I, Report on Activities for the years*



Two new Secretariats—the Enginemen and Firemen, and the Civil Servants—were recognised in 1930 and 1932. The Building Workers and Wood Workers joined forces, however, in 1934, as also did the Secretariats for the Public Services and Civil Servants in 1935. These changes brought the number back to 27, where it remained till the outbreak of war.<sup>1</sup>

### c. *Relations between Trade Secretariats*

There have been few big disputes, if any, to disturb the relations between the International Trade Secretariats themselves. A more serious problem was that of their collective relations with the I.F.T.U.—a question which was almost continually under discussion.<sup>2</sup> The spheres of activity of the various Trade Secretariats were fairly well delimited and there do not seem to have been any serious disputes on questions of demarcation. If there was an occasional difference of opinion as to the competence of a Trade Secretariat in a given matter, as when the Textile Workers' International questioned the right of the International Federation of General Factory Workers to occupy itself with the artificial silk industry, this did not mean that there was a direct conflict.<sup>3</sup> In several instances, as we have seen, it was possible to secure the amalgamation of Trade Secretariats working in adjoining fields. Even in the cases in which amalgamation discussions dragged on without producing the desired result there was no open dispute between the Trade Secretariats concerned, but rather an agreement to differ.

Generally speaking, the relations between the Trade Secretariats were friendly. They differed, of course, on questions of general policy, as did the national trade union centres, but opportunities for threshing out these differences and adopting a common policy were provided by the periodical joint meetings with the I.F.T.U. The problem of promoting co-operation among the Trade Secretariats, therefore, did not give rise to any serious difficulties.

1933-36, International Federation of General Factory Workers, Amsterdam, 1937, p. 35. *The International Federation of Building and Wood Workers during the years 1934, 1935.* I.B.W.W., Amsterdam, June 1936, p. 74.

<sup>1</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1930-32.* I.F.T.U., Paris, 1934, p. 42. *I.F.T.U. Triennial Report, 1933-35.* Congress, London, 1936. I.F.T.U., Paris, 1937, p. 53. *The International Federation of Building and Wood Workers during the years 1934, 1935.* I.B.W.W., Amsterdam, June 1936, pp. 13, 135.

<sup>2</sup> See below, p. 159.

<sup>3</sup> *International Federation of General Factory Workers*, Amsterdam, 1937, p. 66.

#### d. *Relations with Russian Organisations*

In dealing with the question of unity with the organisations in Russia the International Trade Secretariats for the most part took the same line as the I.F.T.U. At one period, however, a Russian organisation was affiliated to one of the Trade Secretariats, though the I.F.T.U. was never able to secure the affiliation of the Russian national centre.

The attitude of the I.F.T.U. to Moscow was clearly defined in a resolution adopted by the Management Committee in 1921, which declared that in view of the destructive action contemplated by the Third International any organisation affiliating to the Trade Union International in Moscow would automatically place itself outside the I.F.T.U. No objection was raised to this resolution by the Trade Secretariats, either at the next Congress of the I.F.T.U. or at the Conference of Trade Secretariats which was held at the same time.<sup>1</sup>

During the period 1922-1924 a number of Trade Secretariats, including the wood workers, building workers, general factory workers, leather workers, printers, lithographers, postal workers, public services, commercial, clerical and technical employees and miners, took decisions in support of the I.F.T.U. and against the admission of unions that were already affiliated to the Red International of Labour Unions in Moscow.

Three Secretariats took a different line. The International Metal Workers' Federation received an application for affiliation from Russia at the end of 1922 and in May 1923 a discussion took place at Friedrichshafen between representatives of the Federation and delegates from the All-Russian Metal Workers' Union. An agreement was concluded by which the Russian union declared its 'honest desire' to become a member of the International Metal Workers' Federation and to 'collaborate loyally in the development of the organisation', while the representatives of the International Metal Workers' Federation agreed to recommend that the affiliation of the Russian Union be accepted. Later in the year the Central Committee of the International Metal Workers' Federation accepted the agreement in principle but instructed the Secretary to clear up points on which some of the members had expressed 'doubt and hesitation'.<sup>2</sup>

During the same period negotiations with Moscow were conducted by the International Transportworkers' Federation. At

<sup>1</sup> *The International Trade Union Movement, Official Organ of the I.F.T.U.*, Amsterdam, Supplement V, April 1922, p. 75. *The Activities of the I.F.T.U.*, 1922-24. I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1924, p. 38.

<sup>2</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U.*, 1922-24. I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1924, p. 42.

the beginning of 1923 the I.T.F. was approached by the Russian Transport Workers' Union with a request that a joint conference be held to consider the possibility of common action against war and reaction. A Conference accordingly took place in Berlin in May 1923. Resolutions were adopted in favour of the creation of a committee of action, the opening of a relief fund and the organisation of an international congress of transport workers' organisations 'of every country and tendency'. These, however, were not endorsed by the General Council of the I.T.F., which asked the I.F.T.U. Executive to seek a basis of agreement with either the Russian Unions or the R.I.L.U.<sup>1</sup>

A third Secretariat actually received a Russian organisation into affiliation. At the beginning of 1922 the Management Committee of the International Union of the Workers in the Food and Drink Trades decided to accept the affiliation of the Russian union of food and drink workers on the ground that an organisation was entitled to be admitted if it accepted the rules. This decision was eventually endorsed by a vote of 22 to 20 at the Congress of the International Union in 1923. 'The Dutch Bakers' Union withdrew from the International Union in protest against the admission of the Russians, while the Russians themselves made it clear that they intended to 'raise the flag' of the R.I.L.U. inside the International Union and to carry on propaganda against the I.F.T.U.<sup>2</sup>

During the period 1924-1926 decisions in opposition to the affiliation of Russian unions were taken by the boot and shoe operatives, building workers, commercial, clerical and technical employees, factory workers, glass workers, hatters, land workers, miners, postal workers, textile workers, tobacco workers and wood workers. Their general line was that Russian Unions could not be admitted to the Trade Secretariats until the Russian trade union centre had joined the I.F.T.U. The food and drink workers complained in their Bulletin that it was both 'useless and impossible' to attempt to co-operate with the Russians in working out a consistent policy. The Russian delegates were not concerned about practical trade union work but were 'out to make use of every opportunity for propagating their unpractical political ideas'.<sup>3</sup>

After this some difficulty was caused by the conclusion of 'reciprocity agreements' between the Russian unions and those in Norway and Finland. This development led to renewed discussions in some of the Trade Secretariats but no further Russian

<sup>1</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1922-24.* I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1924, p. 45.

<sup>2</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1922-24.* I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1924, p. 49.

<sup>3</sup> *I.F.T.U., Report on Activities 1924-26.* I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1927, p. 28.

unions were accepted into affiliation. In 1929 the Russian food and drink workers withdrew from the International Union for the food and drink trades, after the Congress of the Union in 1928 had passed a resolution regretting that all efforts to secure unity among the food-workers' unions had been baffled by the influence of the R.I.L.U. The withdrawal of this union marked the end of a chapter.<sup>1</sup>

### *c. Relations with I.F.T.U.*

Finally there was the question of the relations between the International Trade Secretariats and the I.F.T.U. At certain points their work overlapped. Action taken by a Trade Secretariat to improve conditions of labour in its own industry was a matter of importance to the I.F.T.U., which was concerned with conditions in industry generally. On the other hand, decisions taken in this field by the I.F.T.U. had to have regard not only to the views of the national centres but also to those of the Trade Secretariats. There was a similar common interest when it came to wider economic and political questions, such as unemployment, disarmament or resistance to Fascism. Such questions were discussed by the Trade Secretariats, as well as by the I.F.T.U., and it was essential that their decisions and action should be co-ordinated. Another problem was to find the best form of organisation. The I.F.T.U. was based on national centres and the Trade Secretariats on unions in separate industries. Was this the most satisfactory arrangement? And in what ways could the collaboration between these organisations be achieved? Should there be merely consultation between them? Or should the Trade Secretariats be directly represented in the various organs of the I.F.T.U.?

It will be remembered that an agreement on relations was reached by the I.F.T.U. and the Trade Secretariats in 1922. The Trade Secretariats were to be concerned only with the practical application of decisions taken in connection with general international actions and therefore were to be represented at International Trade Union Congresses without the right to vote.<sup>2</sup> It will also be remembered that the Trade Secretariats agreed at Vienna in 1924 not to take final decisions on general questions, or in regard to special questions affecting other trade union organisations without prior consultation with the I.F.T.U.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1927-30. Congress, Stockholm, 1930.* I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1931, p. 37.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 146.

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 131.

A further decision taken at the Vienna Congress in 1924 was that three representatives of the Trade Secretariats should sit on the General Council of the I.F.T.U.<sup>1</sup> In 1925 the Executive of the I.F.T.U. met representatives of the Trade Secretariats again, and it was decided that a joint commission representing the Trade Secretariats and the I.F.T.U. should draw up specific regulations to govern the relations between the I.F.T.U. and the Secretariats.<sup>2</sup>

When the Paris Congress of the I.F.T.U. met in 1927 it had before it a set of draft regulations prepared by the commission and a proposal from the Austrian national centre for changing the structure of the I.F.T.U. Under the Austrian proposal the I.F.T.U. would have been composed of national centres and International Trade Secretariats—one centre from each country and one Trade Secretariat from each group of industries. This plan was, however, rejected by a conference of the I.F.T.U. Executive and the Trade Secretariats, held immediately before the Congress, and was accordingly left out of consideration by the Congress itself.<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, the Congress adopted a scheme for regulating the relations between the Trade Secretariats and the I.F.T.U. as recommended by the conference of the Secretariats with the I.F.T.U. Executive. The new regulations declared that the Trade Secretariats should consist of national trade or industrial organisations and defined in detail the conditions for affiliation. It was provided that the Trade Secretariats should be autonomous in their organisation and activities and that they should collaborate with the I.F.T.U. in carrying out the resolutions of the International Trade Union Congress and the General Council. On the other hand, they were not to take any action affecting the I.F.T.U. or its national centres without prior agreement. The undertaking not to take final decisions on general questions without consultation was repeated.

The representation of the Trade Secretariats on the General Council of the I.F.T.U. was withdrawn on the grounds that three delegates could not effectively represent the Trade Secretariats as a whole. Accordingly the rules of the I.F.T.U. were amended to provide that the General Council should consist of the members of the Executive Committee and one delegate from each national centre. The composition of the Executive Committee was changed as well. Henceforward it was to consist of

<sup>1</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1922-24.* I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1924, pp. 265, 359.

<sup>2</sup> *I.F.T.U., Report on Activities 1924-26.* I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1927, p. 26.

<sup>3</sup> *Proceedings of Fourth Congress of I.F.T.U., 1927.* I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1927, pp. 15, 71, 190.

a president, five vice-presidents and a general secretary, instead of a president, three vice-presidents and three secretaries.<sup>1</sup>

It was agreed that an annual conference of the Trade Secretariats should be held at the same time as the annual meeting of the I.F.T.U. General Council. These conferences were to provide opportunities for closer collaboration. The General Council was to meet independently, but when the report on activities and the programme of action for the coming year were under discussion the representatives of the Trade Secretariats were to be present in a consultative capacity. Subjects for discussion at the conference of the Trade Secretariats included the strengthening of relations with the I.F.T.U., the carrying out of the decisions of the International Trade Union Congress, and the development of the Trade Secretariats' press service.

A further change related to the representation of the Trade Secretariats at the International Trade Union Congress. Previously the Congress had consisted of delegates from the national centres and the members of the General Council (including the three representatives of the Trade Secretariats). It was now provided that the Congress should be composed only of delegates from the national centres and that the Trade Secretariats should be entitled to attend in a consultative capacity.<sup>2</sup>

The report to the Stockholm Congress in 1930 claimed that these new arrangements had 'worked well'. Considerable numbers of representatives of the Trade Secretariats attended the General Council meetings and the co-operation was 'all that could be desired'. These representatives were only intended to put in an appearance during the discussion of the report on activities and the programme of action, but as most of the questions dealt with by the General Council were also of interest to the Trade Secretariats their representatives were usually present at all the sessions.<sup>3</sup>

Some of the delegates at the Conference of the Executive of the I.F.T.U. with the Trade Secretariats, just before the Stockholm Congress, thought that it was going too far to claim that the relations were entirely satisfactory. The conference was discussing a proposal from the I.T.F., inviting the Congress of the I.F.T.U. to instruct the Executive to study the question of

<sup>1</sup> Other changes were that the General Council was to meet annually instead of twice a year, while the Executive was to continue to meet six times a year, and that the expenses of members of the General Council were to be paid by their organisations, while those of the Executive were to be paid, as before, by the I.F.T.U. See also Chapter V, pp. 176-183.

<sup>2</sup> *Proceedings of Fourth Congress of I.F.T.U.*, 1927. I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1927, pp. 90, 143, 195, 272.

<sup>3</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U.*, 1927-30, Congress, Stockholm, 1930. I.F.T.U. Amsterdam, 1931, p. 31.

constructing the I.F.T.U. on the basis of the Trade Secretariats. While some delegates favoured such an enquiry, others thought that the Trade Secretariats in their existing form were not yet sufficiently developed to form a sound foundation for a new trade union International. Some thought that the I.F.T.U. might be based on the Trade Secretariats and the national centres, while others held that the existing form of organisation was the best. Eventually the conference decided by only 12 votes to 11 to recommend an enquiry into the possibility of basing the organisation on the Trade Secretariats and the national centres.<sup>1</sup>

This recommendation was considered by a commission of the Stockholm Congress, together with proposals from two national centres calling for definite action in the same sphere. The first—from Great Britain—asked the Executive ‘to devise a scheme for the reorganisation of the I.F.T.U. on the basis of representation of the International Trade Secretariats’. In the second the Austrian centre returned to the subject with a call to the Executive to propose ‘an amendment of the Rules with a view to incorporating the International Trade Secretariats with the structure of the I.F.T.U.’. Although the three proposals differed so widely in their wording, they all expressed the idea that the Trade Secretariats should become an integral part of the I.F.T.U. The commission, however, did not feel that the time had come for a definite decision on these lines, but recommended that the subject be investigated. Its actual proposal—which was accepted by the Congress—was that the Executive should be asked to study the ‘closer linking up’ of the Trade Secretariats with the structure of the I.F.T.U., to report to the next Congress and, if necessary, to draft proposals to that effect.<sup>2</sup>

Three years later the report to the Brussels Congress claimed that relations between the I.F.T.U. and the Trade Secretariats had been ‘satisfactorily developed’ and that co-operation had been ‘loyal and friendly’. As in former periods joint meetings had been called to deal with questions arising between the Trade Secretariats individually or affecting them in general. In addition

<sup>1</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1927-30, Congress, Stockholm, 1930.* I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1931, pp. 244, 254.

<sup>2</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1927-30, Congress, Stockholm, 1930.* I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1931, pp. 272, 310, 393-4. Various other proposals affecting the relations of the I.F.T.U. and the Trade Secretariats were also adopted. Two of these were of special interest, (a) that the standing agenda of the annual meeting of the Trade Secretariats should include the subjects of I.L.O. Conventions, and (b) that the officials of the Trade Secretariats should collaborate with the members of the I.F.T.U. Executive prior to and at all the annual International Labour Conferences held at Geneva, in respect of the specific subjects in which they were interested.

to the three annual conferences there had been meetings and discussions at Geneva on specific trade subjects interesting particular Secretariats and joint meetings of the Executive of the I.F.T.U. with representatives of the Secretariats concerned.

On the subject of the incorporation of the Trade Secretariats with the I.F.T.U., the report stated that the Stockholm resolution had been given a first discussion at the conference of the Trade Secretariats at Berne in 1932. The Secretariats had been asked for fuller information as to their proposals, and the pros and cons had once more been discussed. After the debate a vote was taken on the question 'whether a change in the structure of the I.F.T.U. is desired or whether the matter should be followed up further'. The result had been a rejection by 16 votes to 7, and in view of this decision by the Trade Secretariats themselves a proposal for the appointment of a joint committee to study the matter further had been dropped.<sup>1</sup>

When the matter came up at the Brussels Congress in 1933 a new factor had entered into it. Owing to the destruction of the German trade unions by the Nazis the Trade Secretariats had lost a considerable proportion of their members. Meetings of Trade Secretariats with headquarters in Berlin had been called by the I.F.T.U., and a conference of the I.F.T.U. Executive and the Trade Secretariats had been held in Paris to consider the new situation. The General Secretary of the I.F.T.U., Walter Schevenels, told the Congress that two courses were open to the Trade Secretariats if they were to overcome their financial difficulties. One was the amalgamation of the smaller Secretariats with others that were larger and more efficient; the other was the concentration of the Secretariats in the town in which the Headquarters of the I.F.T.U. were situated. The latter course, he said, would facilitate technical co-operation by enabling the organisations to establish a joint translation office, press section, and so on. General agreement on the need for effective measures had been reached at Paris but no definite action had been taken.<sup>2</sup>

In the discussion at the Congress various delegates suggested that the efforts to promote closer links between the Trade Secretariats and the I.F.T.U. should be renewed. A. G. Walkden (Great Britain) proposed an immediate conference of the Trade Secretariats to which the I.F.T.U. Executive should submit definite proposals for concentration. Van der Heeg, for the clothing workers, said he would welcome amalgamation or the alternative of technical co-operation, but did not think that all

<sup>1</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1930-32.* I.F.T.U., Paris, 1934, pp. 44, 48.

<sup>2</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1930-32.* I.F.T.U., Paris, 1934, p. 333.



the Trade Secretariats could move their headquarters to the new seat of the I.F.T.U. in Paris. Roussin, for the hatters, accepted amalgamation in principle, but drew attention to its disadvantages. Smit said on behalf of the commercial, clerical and technical employees, that he wanted the incorporation of the Trade Secretariats in the I.F.T.U. Those present at Paris, he said, had been in favour of amalgamation provided that their own organisations were left untouched. He thought therefore that it would be useless to call another conference, as it would be a failure. Tom Shaw, for the textile workers, had written to say that a concentration of the Trade Secretariats would be prejudicial; the Secretariats should be dispersed amongst the largest possible number of countries. Reichmann (Switzerland) thought the time had come for the amalgamation of kindred Trade Secretariats and suggested that the I.F.T.U. should help by drawing up guiding principles. George Hicks (Great Britain) emphasised the need for the Trade Secretariats and the I.F.T.U. to adjust themselves to changing economic conditions. He felt that there was sufficient room in the I.F.T.U. to represent the interests of the Trade Internationals and proposed that the I.F.T.U. Executive should work out plans and discuss them with the Trade Secretariats.<sup>1</sup>

After a lengthy debate the question was reconsidered by the Executive, which came back with a suggestion that they be instructed to draft a scheme for the complete reorganisation of the I.F.T.U. As soon as this was ready they would convene a conference of the General Council and the Trade Secretariats. They also suggested that the General Council should be given power to amend the rules, so that any scheme of reorganisation adopted might be put into force without waiting for the next Congress. These proposals were adopted.<sup>2</sup>

No progress was made with the suggestion that the Trade Secretariats should concentrate at the headquarters of the I.F.T.U. Of the twelve Secretariats with seats in Germany in 1933, four transferred their offices to Holland, three to Denmark, two to France, and one each to Belgium, Czechoslovakia and England.<sup>3</sup>

A further study of the problem of reorganisation was made by the Executive in the latter part of 1933, and a draft scheme was circulated to the Trade Secretariats and the national centres. The question was fully discussed once more at the General

<sup>1</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1930-32.* I.F.T.U., Paris, 1934, p. 346.

<sup>2</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1930-32.* I.F.T.U., Paris, 1934, p. 384.

<sup>3</sup> *I.F.T.U., Triennial Report, 1933-35, Congress, London, 1936.* I.F.T.U., Paris, 1937, p. 49.

Council meeting in 1934, but it was obvious 'that the representatives of the Trade Secretariats were firmly attached to the maintenance of the *status quo* and the independence of each Trade International, while however recognising that it was necessary and desirable to bring about closer and more constant collaboration between themselves and the International Federation of Trade Unions'. The General Council decided to proceed no further with the plan for complete reorganisation but to set up a Co-ordination Committee. The committee's first task was to co-ordinate the work of the I.F.T.U. and the Trade Secretariats in fighting Fascism, but it was left free to promote the solution of the problem of reorganisation if it felt that it could usefully do so.<sup>1</sup>

The members of the Co-ordination Committee were Edo Fimmen (Transport Workers), W. G. Spiekman (Commercial, Technical and Clerical Employees), K. de Jonge (Factory Workers), van der Heeg (Clothing Workers), Tom Shaw (Textile Workers); with Sir Walter Citrine (Great Britain), Léon Jouhaux (France) and Walter Schevenels (General Secretary) for the I.F.T.U. Several meetings were held in 1934 and 1935, but although the committee performed a useful service in co-ordinating the struggle against Fascism it did not succeed in promoting a closer form of organisation. In November 1935, Tom Shaw moved that the committee be dissolved, on the ground that it had not produced the results expected. It was, however, agreed that the committee should remain in being till the London Congress in 1936.<sup>2</sup>

No action was taken by the London Congress on the matter, and the committee itself decided in London to carry on for a further period. A year later the committee's work was examined once more by the annual conference of the I.F.T.U. Executive and the Trade Secretariats in Warsaw. There it was agreed that the committee was not really necessary. Satisfactory co-operation between the I.F.T.U. and the Trade Secretariats was possible without the help of such a body and it was accordingly decided that the committee be dissolved.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I.F.T.U., *Triennial Report, 1933-35, Congress, London, 1936*. I.F.T.U., Paris, 1937, p. 57.

<sup>2</sup> I.F.T.U., *Triennial Report, 1933-35, Congress, London, 1936*. I.F.T.U., Paris, 1937, p. 58.

<sup>3</sup> *The International Trade Union Movement*, I.F.T.U., Paris, Vol. XVII, Nos. 1-7, January-July 1937, pp. 12, 46. *Report on Activities and Financial Report of the I.T.F. for the years 1935, 1936 and 1937*, p. 49. *International Federation of General Factory Workers, Report on Activities for the years 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936*, Amsterdam, 1937, p. 34. *The International Federation of Building and Wood Workers during the years 1934, 1935*. I.B.W.W., Amsterdam, June 1936, p. 73.

A final attempt to improve the machinery of relations was made shortly before the war. At the conference of the I.F.T.U. Executive and the Trade Secretariats in Zurich in July 1939 the matter was brought up once again. After various suggestions had been discussed it was ultimately decided that closer regular contact between the I.F.T.U. and the Trade Secretariats should be brought about by more frequent joint meetings.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The International Trade Union Movement*, I.F.T.U., Paris, Vol. XIX, Nos. 6-7, June-July 1939, p. 187.

## CHAPTER V

### PROBLEMS OF ORGANISATION

SUCCESSFUL international action, whether in the Labour movement or in the sphere of international government, is only possible in the long run if it rests upon a sound basis of organisation. International meetings and conferences may be held, and international decisions or agreements may be reached, but if action is to follow—and above all if action is to be sustained—it is necessary to develop international organisations and institutions.

This does not mean, of course, that the establishment of an international organisation in the Labour movement (such as the L.S.I. or the I.F.T.U.) or of an institution for international government (such as the League of Nations or the I.L.O.) will in itself ensure success. Experience has already demonstrated that such bodies may have serious weaknesses. Their success or failure depends not only upon their own structure and constitution, but also upon the activities and policies of their constituent parts. It is, in fact, in the different countries that the main responsibility for the success or failure of international organisations and institutions will in the last resort rest. On the other hand, no amount of good will in the separate countries will suffice in the absence of an adequate organisation to prepare the ground for the international discussions and to ensure that the international decisions are carried out.

Given the desire for international co-operation, whether in the Labour movement or in any other sphere, the first problem that arises is that of the way in which collaboration among the different countries can be organised. Hitherto, the machinery of international co-operation has worked best in facilitating an exchange of information and opinion, and has given the least satisfactory results in the field of action. But unless action can follow upon discussion and decision, the decisions become meaningless and even the discussions lose their interest. Accordingly, the most important problems of organisation in the international sphere are those which relate to the machinery for international action. And these, while they are the most important, are also the most difficult to solve.

Thus, while the League of Nations has some remarkable achievements to its credit it failed to stand the supreme test of

action. Through its medium the States were able to discuss disarmament, the peaceful revision of treaties and the settlement of international disputes, but they were not able in the long run to restrain aggression and ensure peace—partly because they did not provide the League with adequate means of action and partly because of their failure to make full use of the League's machinery as it stood. Again, the I.L.O. established a magnificent service of information on labour and social questions, and its conferences were the scene of many fine decisions; but how much more effective it would have been if arrangements could have been made for its Draft Conventions and Recommendations to be accepted and applied in the different countries without undue delay!

Similarly, it is in the application of international decisions that some of the greatest difficulties have arisen in the international labour movement. The decisions had to be carried out by the affiliated organisations in their own countries, and as the international situation deteriorated the difficulty of securing an observance of the international decisions increased, with the result that the decisions themselves lost much of their significance.

In general it may be said that the purposes for which international organisations exist are (a) to maintain contact between the different countries (which includes the exchange of information); (b) to arrive at international decisions and agreements (which involves the preparation of discussions, meetings and conferences); and (c) to provide machinery for international action (which has to be carried out in the several countries). Some of the problems of organisation which have arisen for the international labour movement in these spheres have already been mentioned.<sup>1</sup> They relate in the main to the composition and structure of the international organisations, the relations between the international bodies and their national sections, and the extension of international organisation to countries not yet represented. A question apart is that of the relations between the organisations of the international Labour and Socialist movement and those which owe allegiance to Moscow.

#### I. COMPOSITION AND STRUCTURE

Problems concerning the composition and structure of the international organisations of the labour movement are of several kinds. One set of problems arises out of the fact that the international organisations are based on national sections; another

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter III, p. 83, and Chapter IV, p. 130.

is produced by the difficulty of settling their internal structure; and a third group is concerned with the relations between the international organisations in the different fields.

a. *Position of National Sections*

As in so many other spheres the international organisations in the labour movement are based on national sections and not on individual membership. It will be recalled that the rules of the First International provided for persons to join as individuals, as well as for the collective affiliation of trade unions and other bodies. But this was before any substantial Labour or Socialist parties had been established in the different countries. The Second International, however, was composed of parties which affiliated collectively. Similarly, when the I.F.T.U. was founded on the industrial side the trade union organisations in the various countries were taken as the basis.<sup>1</sup>

This form of organisation must be accepted as one of the essential facts. There is no likelihood that the principal international organisations in the labour movement will turn over to a system of individual membership. Such a system is only conceivable in the case of small societies or associations working in a limited field. The large international bodies, if they are to have any substantial power and authority, must be built upon a foundation of representative organisations in the different countries.

But the fact that the international bodies are federations of national organisations means that situations will continually arise in which the needs and interests of the affiliated sections in their own countries will overshadow their desire to co-operate internationally. The national organisations (e.g. the Socialist parties or trade unions) are already in existence before they decide to associate in the international sphere. They are not subordinate parts of an international parent body and their continued existence does not depend upon their international connection. They have their own work to do in their own countries, and there is a natural tendency for their activities at home to take precedence over their work in the sphere of international co-operation.

One of the fundamental problems of international co-operation, in fact, whether in the labour movement or otherwise, is to secure a just balance between the national and international interests of the national sections. It is not merely that the interests of one country may clash with those of others, but that

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter I, pp. 10 and 16.

the work of the national sections at home tends to exercise the first claim upon their time and energy. It is not merely that a conflict of loyalties may arise—though that, too, is constantly happening—but that perfectly legitimate interests which could be promoted internationally are given insufficient attention because the tasks to be performed in the national sphere seem to bulk more largely. An organisation affiliated to an international body is in a dual position, and the implications of that have not always been accepted. If it intends to take part in international activities it needs to be organised and equipped for that purpose, as well as for the performance of its tasks in the national field. It is not enough to pay affiliation fees, to send delegates to international congresses every three years or so, and perhaps to put forward two or three representatives for the various international committees. If international obligations are to be taken seriously, if the greatest benefit is to be obtained from international co-operation, then continuous attention must be given to the work by qualified people who are not overburdened by other activities.

So far the international organisations in the labour movement have had to work through national sections that have rarely been adequately equipped, either with machinery or with personnel, for the conduct of international activities. Labour and Socialist parties affiliated to the L.S.I., trade union national centres of the I.F.T.U., and individual unions affiliated to the International Trade Secretariats have in many cases been without an international secretary, an international department or an international committee. Some that have been so provided have been handicapped by the fact that the persons concerned have had too little authority or have had other and more pressing claims upon their time.

A trade union or political party affiliated to an international body needs at least an international secretary, with in some cases an international department. Such an official should be able to supply and obtain information on international questions, to keep constantly in touch with the work of the international organisations, to prepare and carry out activities in the international field and, in general, to see that international questions receive their proper share of attention. The number of international secretaries to be found amongst the national section is, however, relatively small. More such secretaries, with international departments, are needed, and they should be regarded as amongst the leading officers of their organisations. People who already hold leading positions might add international activities to their other functions. There are already cases in

which general secretaries direct the international activities of their organisations, and even act as secretaries of international bodies. But in such cases it is obvious that the national work of the general secretary will come first and that his international activities cannot be intensive and sustained. This is all the more reason for having a department which can give continuous attention to international affairs. Although many parties and unions would find it difficult to appoint full-time international officers, it would be advisable for them to do so wherever they can.

Similarly, an international committee is needed to advise, to initiate proposals and to keep international questions constantly under review. Here again it is important that the members of the committee should be able to give a fair amount of time and attention to the work. They should at least have their minds on international affairs and be prepared to keep themselves regularly informed—and not merely take things as they arise at the meetings. An international committee cannot be a satisfactory instrument if its members are so absorbed by other trade union, political, or professional activities that international questions have to take second place.

In short, a party or trade union which is affiliated to an international body needs to be organised and equipped for the performance of its functions as a national section of that body. This implies both informed committee work and competent staff work. An essential part of successful international co-operation is effective participation by the national organisations—in preparing for meetings and conferences, in formulating decisions and in ensuring that the decisions are put into effect.

Another of the difficulties encountered by the international bodies arises from the fact that the national sections differ in size and strength, in form and in status. Thus, although the Labour and Socialist parties of the different countries are kindred organisations, there are profound differences between them. Even the trade unions, which bear a closer resemblance to one another, are by no means identical.

Differences in membership and extent arise, of course, from variations in the size and importance of the countries themselves; but there are also differences in the kind and degree of responsibility which trade unions, trade union centres or Socialist parties have to carry.

Again, the actual form of organisation varies. The Labour and Socialist parties may consist of parties composed entirely of individual members, parties that accept both individual members and organisations affiliated collectively, underground



organisations or groups of emigrés.<sup>1</sup> Trade union national centres likewise vary in composition, in the powers which they may exercise, and in the relations between themselves as central bodies and their constituent unions or federations.

Variations in status also occur. Before the war some of the parties of the L.S.I. were or had been represented in Governments, while others were expecting to be. In some countries the parties still had a long way to go before any opportunity would arise for them to assume Government responsibility. In countries governed by dictatorships the Socialist parties, if they were not actually suppressed and driven underground, were engaged in a constant struggle for the right to function, or even for the very right to exist. On the trade union side, too, the situation varied. There were cases in which the trade unions had secured a recognised place for themselves in the State and others in which they were still fighting for even the most elementary rights of association. In some countries they had won a wide measure of recognition from the employers and were able to enter into collective agreements covering the greater part of industry, while in others the struggle for recognition was bitter and sometimes violent. And, of course, in the countries ruled by dictatorships the unions were persecuted or even suppressed.

Then there are differences in policy and outlook that have grown up in the various countries. These may be due to differences in national character, traditions and culture, or in historical and political background—in the circumstances in which the organisations were formed and developed. Thus, although the Socialist parties or the trade unions in the various countries are kindred organisations with common interests, they have not all reached the same stage of development nor had the same possibilities of action. Accordingly they have varied in their attitude towards the State, in the emphasis placed on their aims and objects, in their view of the methods to be pursued and in their approach to fundamental questions of policy.

These differences have affected the policy and activities of the organisations in the international field. It is therefore important that the international bodies should not merely mirror the differences but should be able to organise these diverse elements into a coherent force. The problem has not yet been satisfactorily solved, though the difficulties have probably been greater in the L.S.I. than in the I.F.T.U. It is not, of course, a problem of organisation pure and simple. Account has also to be taken of external circumstances, such as the policy of

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter II, p. 30.

Governments and the changes in the world economic and political situation.

b. *Internal Structure*

Problems relating to the internal structure of the international organisations are of two main kinds—those concerning the representation of the national sections in the counsels of the international bodies and those which relate to the actual working of their machinery.

In establishing an international organisation, then, provision must be made to enable the national sections to play their part in its work, by giving them seats on the various governing bodies and by providing them with opportunities to express their views and requirements. This raises problems of representation and voting power and also of finance. Apart from the actual methods evolved by experience for the conduct of debate and the formulating of decisions, there is the prior question of how the organisation is to be constituted.

Like many other international bodies and institutions the international organisations in the labour movement provide themselves with a conference or congress to decide questions concerning the rules and to lay down general policy; one or more executive bodies to function in the intervals between conferences; and a secretariat. As a general rule every affiliated body is entitled to representation at the conference or congress, and to one or more seats on the executive committee or council. In many cases there is, however, in addition, a smaller executive or bureau on which only a limited number of affiliated organisations are represented.

While the right of each national section to representation is admitted, the number of representatives and votes allotted to the different sections varies according to their strength. It is interesting to compare the practice of the international organisations of the labour movement in these matters with that of the League of Nations and the I.L.O., since similar problems arise in both fields. In the League of Nations, for example, each member State is regarded as a sovereign body. No member of the League may have more than three representatives at the League Assembly, and every State, large or small, has one vote. At the Conference of the I.L.O. the same rights of representation and voting strength are accorded to each country, whatever its size and importance. Every country may be represented at the International Labour Conference by two delegates from the Government and one each from the employers and workers

(though every delegate may be accompanied by not more than two technical advisers for each item on the agenda). Each delegate has one vote only.

On the other hand, the international organisations in the labour movement usually allocate the representation and voting power according to membership. In the L.S.I., however, other factors are taken into consideration as well.

The rules of the I.F.T.U., for instance, provide that the number of votes accorded to the affiliated national centres shall depend upon the number of members on which they are affiliated. Delegates to the International Trade Union Congress are appointed by the national centres, again in accordance with their affiliated membership.<sup>1</sup> At the London Congress in 1936, nineteen national centres were represented by 132 delegates. Two of the national centres, however, were disqualified from voting (presumably because they were in arrears with their affiliation fees). The seventeen whose right to vote was admitted had a total of 57 votes between them. Eighteen International Trade Secretariats were represented by 35 representatives.<sup>2</sup> The last pre-war Congress at Zurich in 1939 was attended by 106 delegates from nineteen national centres and 35 representatives of 21 International Trade Secretariats. No particulars regarding the distribution of votes were given in the brief report published in *The International Trade Union Movement*, but it appears that the total was 83, as this was the combined figure of votes for and against the two resolutions on which votes were taken.<sup>3</sup>

This method of assessing representation and voting power on the basis of affiliated membership is also common to the International Trade Secretariats. The Rules of the International Transportworkers' Federation provide that a Congress shall be held every two years. Representation at the Congress is based on the affiliated membership of the various unions. Voting is by roll-call, but a card vote 'according to the affiliated membership' can be held on request. The Congress of the International Metal Workers' Federation is held every three years, but in this case the number of representatives from the national organisations 'is determined by each organisation for itself'. The number of votes which they may cast, however, depends upon the membership on which dues are paid. In the case of the Inter-

<sup>1</sup> Representatives of the International Trade Secretariats also attend, but in an advisory capacity. See *Statutes of the International Federation of Trade Unions*, I.F.T.U., Paris, 1935.

<sup>2</sup> I.F.T.U., *Triennial Report, 1933-35, Congress, London, 1936*, I.F.T.U., Paris, 1937, p. 416.

<sup>3</sup> *The International Trade Union Movement*, I.F.T.U., Paris, Vol. XIX, Nos. 6-7, June-July 1939, pp. 188, 205.

national Federation of Textile Workers' Associations the number of delegates to the triennial Congress is not fixed by rule, but it is provided that votes shall be taken on the basis of one vote 'for every thousand members represented'.

Provision for a triennial Congress is likewise made in the rules of the International Federation of Building and Wood Workers. Here again there is no mention of the number of delegates which the affiliated organisations may send. It is, however, laid down that the voting power is to be 'determined by the number of members for whom the last affiliation fee due was paid'. The Congress of the Miners' International Federation is held at least once in three years. Each national organisation has the right to nominate 'as many delegates to the Congress as it thinks desirable'. Voting is by show of hands. A 'membership or final vote' can, however, be taken, and this is graded according to the 'paid up' membership of the different organisations.<sup>1</sup>

Some of the International Trade Secretariats, which have members in a variety of trades, hold conferences or meetings of the unions interested in specific trades in addition to the full Congresses. The I.T.F., for instance, holds international meetings of representatives of the various sections of the transport industry, such as dockers, railwaymen and seamen.<sup>2</sup> The I.B.W.W., to take another example, has a rule providing for the holding of 'industrial conferences' for each of the 'principal industries or trade groups'.

In the case of the L.S.I., the provisions are more complicated. The International Socialist Congress meets, as a rule, once in three years—though no Congress was held from 1931 till the outbreak of war. Representation is based on the number of Congress votes awarded to each of the affiliated parties. The first Congress vote entitles a party to 5 delegates and each additional vote to 3 further delegates, with a maximum of 80.<sup>3</sup> Congress votes are allocated according to certain 'guiding principles'. Each party receives a number of Congress votes

<sup>1</sup> *Constitution of the International Transportworkers' Federation, I.T.F., Amsterdam, p. 980; Rules of the International Metal Workers' Federation, I.M.F., 1921; Rules of the International Federation of Textile Workers' Associations, adopted by the 16th International Congress at Stockholm, July 1939, I.F.T.W.A., 1939; Rules of the International Federation of Building and Wood Workers, adopted by the First International Building and Wood Workers' Congress, London, 14 and 15 July, 1936, I.B.W.W., Amsterdam, 1937; Rules of the Miners' International Federation, M.I.F., London, 1938.*

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter IV, p. 151.

<sup>3</sup> Before the Vienna Congress in 1931 the maximum was 60, but each Party was entitled to send as many fraternal delegates as full delegates, so that the actual limit was 120. At Vienna it was decided that future Congresses should be attended by full delegates only.

varying with its membership, but it is also given further votes based on an estimate of the total strength of the organised working class in its country (account being taken of the trade unions, the co-operative societies, the Socialist vote in general elections and the Socialist Press). Congress votes were also allocated in the light of special circumstances, 'as in the case of partly or wholly illegal Parties, in whose countries the terrorism of the Government hinders or entirely prevents the building up of the Party organisation'. The maximum number of votes for any one party in 1931 was 40.

After the Vienna Congress there were 329 Congress votes divided amongst the various parties. The largest numbers were held by Great Britain and Germany with the maximum of 40 each, followed by France with 26 and Austria with 20 (between two parties). Poland had 18 for five parties and Czechoslovakia 18 between three. There were 17 for Belgium, 16 for Italy (awarded in the light of the special conditions obtaining in that country), 14 for Sweden, 13 for Denmark and 12 for Holland. Each of the other parties had less than 10. The Congress itself was attended by 664 delegates and 76 fraternal delegates.<sup>1</sup>

The re-allocation of votes undertaken in 1939 radically altered the position. By this time the number of Congress votes was down to 312, as a result of changes in the situation of various parties. The main effect of the re-allocation was to curtail the number of votes allowed to parties which had been driven underground. This reduced the number by another 58, leaving a total of 254.<sup>2</sup>

For the business arising in the intervals between Congresses the I.F.T.U. set up a General Council with an Executive, the Trade Secretariats established similar bodies, and the L.S.I. appointed an Executive, a Bureau and an Administrative Committee. The L.S.I. was also able to hold an International Conference.<sup>3</sup> Here again there are differences as compared with the methods adopted by the League of Nations and the I.L.O. The League Council consists of a number of permanent members (the original members being the representatives of the Principal Allied and Associated Powers) together with representatives of various other States (originally four) designated by the Assembly. At meetings of the Council each member State has one vote and may have 'not more than one Representative'. The Governing Body of the I.L.O. is composed of thirty-two members, of whom

<sup>1</sup> *Fourth Congress of the L.S.I., Vienna, 1931*, pp. 782, 904, 911.

<sup>2</sup> *International Information*, published by the Secretariat of the L.S.I., 1939, p. 261. See also Chapter III, p. 84.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter III, p. 80.

sixteen are Government members, eight appointed by the 'countries of chief industrial importance' and eight by the other Government delegates at the Conference. The remaining sixteen consist of eight employers' members and eight workers' members, appointed by the employers' and workers' delegates respectively. Each of these members has one vote. In both the League Council and the Governing Body of the I.L.O., then, special provision is made for the representation of what are regarded as the most important countries.

In the case of the I.F.T.U., the members of the Executive are elected by the Congress, which normally meets every three years. They consist of a President, five Vice-Presidents (increased to six by the Congress in 1939) and the General Secretary. The Assistant General Secretary also attends in a consultative capacity.<sup>1</sup> Meetings of the Executive are held six times a year. Each member has one vote. This body is responsible for the general administration of the I.F.T.U., and for all questions 'except those expressly reserved for the General Council and the Congress'. The rules do not stipulate the countries from which the members are to be drawn. The General Council comprises the members of the Executive and one delegate from each of the national centres.<sup>2</sup> Its meetings take place annually. The main work of the General Council is to examine the report on activities submitted by the Executive and to consider the programme of action for the coming year. It also settles questions of organisation and finance. Every member has one vote. In special cases, when it is unnecessary or impracticable to call a meeting, a postal vote may be taken. It will be noticed that all national centres are represented on the General Council, and that a few have a second representative in the person of a member of the Executive.

The corresponding body in the L.S.I. is the Executive. Before 1939 the members of the Executive numbered over 50, but the re-allocation undertaken in that year brought the number down to 38. The representation of the affiliated parties is based upon the number of their congress votes, the number of seats for each party varying from one to four. In countries with more than one affiliated party the seats are divided among the parties proportionately. Parties which are not entitled to representation because they do not hold sufficient congress votes may send a representative to the Executive in a consultative capacity. It is,

<sup>1</sup> Down to 1927 the Executive consisted of a President, three Vice-Presidents and three Secretaries. See Chapter IV, p. 160.

<sup>2</sup> Representatives of the International Trade Secretariats are also invited. See Chapter IV, p. 160.

however, open to two or more parties to form a group, which can be represented by a member with full powers. Voting is by show of hands, though a vote may be taken 'by congress strength' on demand.

Meetings of the Executive are not held at fixed intervals, but down to the time of the last Congress they were held as a general rule twice a year. The Executive is responsible for convening the Congress unless the date has already been fixed by the Congress itself. It allocates the Congress votes and is empowered to make changes in the scale of affiliation fees. It takes political decisions in the periods between Congresses and may, indeed, exercise all the functions of the Congress, subject to appeal.

Similar arrangements exist in the International Trade Secretariats, though with some interesting differences. The I.T.F. has a General Council of fifteen members elected by the Congress to represent all countries or groups of countries and all sections of transport workers. The General Council meets annually and deals with 'all matters arising between Congresses'. There is an Executive Committee of six members elected by the Congress and General Council in such a way as to 'provide for the representation of the affiliated nations and tendencies in the most effective manner'. It meets four times a year and has 'full executive authority'. The I.T.F. has also a Management Committee of three members, resident in the country in which the I.T.F. has its headquarters and appointed by the affiliated organisations in that country.

In the case of the International Metal Workers' Federation there is an Executive Committee elected by the Congress and composed of the Secretary and four members from four different sections and countries. The Committee meets every six months. The members of this body, together with the national representatives, constitute a Central Committee which corresponds to the General Councils already mentioned. There is no fixed rule as to when the Central Committee is to meet. One national representative is appointed by the affiliated organisation or organisations in each country as an international correspondent and source of information. He has to be assisted in each case by a national committee—either the committee of his own organisation, or a joint committee when there are several organisations in his country.

The International Federation of Textile Workers' Associations has a General Council, which does not include representatives of all affiliated organisations but only of those paying fees on at least 5,000 members. Two delegates are allowed for organisations with a membership of up to 200,000 and three delegates

for those whose membership exceeds that figure. Each organisation has one vote, though a vote can be taken on a membership basis if requested. The General Council meets not less than once a year. The executive body is an Administrative Committee of five members appointed by the General Council. There is also an Advisory Committee which can be consulted by the Secretary. This Committee consists of the members of the General Council in the country in which the headquarters of the Federation are situated.

Another example is provided by the International Federation of Building and Wood Workers, which has an Executive Committee comprising nine representatives of six groups of countries elected by the Congress. When electing these members care has to be taken to see that the representation of building and wood workers is approximately equal. This is another of the cases in which there is a definite provision that the representatives are to be drawn from specific groups of countries, in such a way as to leave no group unrepresented. If a new group of at least 200,000 affiliated members is built up in any continent outside Europe, another representative has to be added. The Executive Committee meets annually and has 'full powers to act' between Congresses. The I.B.W.W. also has a Management Committee consisting of three members of the Executive Committee, likewise elected by the Congress, namely, the President, the Secretary and one other—who is designated Vice-President and is preferably from a country adjacent to that in which the Federation has its headquarters.

Then there is the Miners' International Federation, which appoints an Executive Committee and a Bureau. The Executive Committee is composed of not more than four representatives of each national organisation, nominated by the organisations themselves and elected by the Congress. This Committee is empowered to consider 'all matters relating to the International Federation'. The Bureau consists of the President, Vice-President and Secretary-Treasurer, and one representative from each national organisation. Meetings of both these Committees are called at the discretion of the President and Secretary-Treasurer. Provision is also made by the rules for the establishment by the Executive Committee of one or more technical committees.

An efficient international organisation usually requires a full-time secretary or secretaries and a properly-staffed Secretariat. Not all the international organisations in the labour movement are so equipped. Both the L.S.I. and the I.F.T.U. and some of the Trade Secretariats have, however, provided themselves with full-time secretaries and staffs of a dozen or more. Before



the last war the Second International had a Secretariat at Brussels, which was established as a result of a decision taken in 1900, eleven years after the International was founded. The Secretary was Camille Huysmans. The trade union International was served by Carl Legien, President of the German trade unions, who was appointed International Secretary of the trade union national centres in 1903. In 1909 he was provided with an assistant. He still directed the secretarial work after his appointment as President of the I.F.T.U. in 1913.

Since the last war there has been an International Secretariat both for the L.S.I. and for the I.F.T.U. At one time the L.S.I. had two secretaries, Tom Shaw and Dr. Friedrich Adler, while the I.F.T.U. had three, Johann Sassenbach, Jan Oudegeest and J. W. Brown. For some years before 1939 Dr. Friedrich Adler was the sole secretary of the L.S.I., while the I.F.T.U. had a general secretary, Walter Schevenels, and an assistant general secretary, Georg Stolz. The L.S.I., like the old Second International, had a Secretariat in Brussels, staffed by experts and assistants from several countries, and the I.F.T.U. maintained a similar Secretariat in Paris.<sup>1</sup>

Among the Trade Secretariats with full-time secretaries are the textile workers and the transport workers. The Secretary of the International Federation of Textile Workers' Associations, until his death shortly before the war, was Tom Shaw, who had previously been joint secretary of the L.S.I. He was succeeded by James Stott. The General Secretary of the I.T.F. was Edo Fimmen, who died in 1942. His place was taken by J. H. Oldenbroek, who was appointed Acting General Secretary for the period of the war. Tom Shaw ran his office with only two or three assistants, while the Secretariat of the I.T.F. was comparable in size to that of the L.S.I. or the I.F.T.U.<sup>2</sup>

Many of the Trade Secretariats had only small office staffs and some of them did not even have a full-time secretary. As a general rule the secretaries of the Trade Secretariats are elected by their respective Congresses. The secretary of the International Federation of Building and Wood Workers, J. W. van Achterbergh, is a member of the Executive Committee and must be an elected representative of the affiliated union or unions in his country in which the Federation has its headquarters. According to rule the Federation is only responsible for part of his salary. The secretary-treasurer of the Miners'

<sup>1</sup> *Fourth Congress of the L.S.I., Vienna, 1931*, p. 139. *I.F.T.U., Triennial Report, 1933-35, Congress, London, 1936*, I.F.T.U., Paris, 1937, p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> *Report on Activities and Financial Report of the I.T.F. for the years 1935, 1936 and 1937*. Amsterdam, 1938, p. 28.

International Federation is Ebby Edwards, who is also secretary of the Mineworkers' Federation of Great Britain.

Such is the general framework of the international organisation of these international bodies. But how does the machinery actually work? Where does the power really lie? Who, in fact, controls the international organisations and determines their policy? In each case, of course, the Congress is supreme. It determines the broad lines of policy, adopts and modifies the rules or constitution, and decides in the last resort on requests for affiliation and on expulsions. But an international congress cannot meet frequently, even if most of the delegates are drawn from Europe alone. The Assembly of the League and the International Conference of the I.L.O. met as a rule once a year. Other meetings were only arranged on special occasions. In the labour movement International congresses are for the most part held every two or three years.

It is therefore extremely important that there should be a fully-representative committee or council capable of meeting between congresses—such as the General Council of the I.F.T.U. and the Executive of the L.S.I. These two bodies are representative in that their members are drawn from all the affiliated parties or national centres. The representative character of the General Council of the I.F.T.U. is enhanced by the fact that delegates from the Trade Secretariats are allowed to attend the meetings and to take part in the discussions, though they may not vote. In the case of the Executive of the L.S.I., each of the affiliated parties is represented, and those whose size does not entitle them to full representation may send a representative to the Executive in a consultative capacity. The re-allocation of 1939 reduced the number of members on the Executive to 38, of whom only 9 were representatives of parties in countries without democracy. Of the 41 affiliated parties 19 were left with only one Congress vote, but as they were able to send representatives in a consultative capacity the Executive continued to represent all the parties in the International.<sup>1</sup> The international conference of the L.S.I., which may also be held between congresses,<sup>2</sup> to take decisions 'on the international policy and tactics of the L.S.I.', is likewise representative of all the parties. Here, as in the case of the Executive, the number of congress votes is the deciding factor, since the parties are entitled to be represented by three times the number of their representatives in the Executive, including the Executive members themselves.

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 177.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter III, p. 80.

With some of the Trade Secretariats the corresponding committee or council is not large enough to include one or more members from every single affiliated union. In order to make these bodies sufficiently representative, therefore, it has been usual to adopt the device already mentioned, of forming groups of countries and appointing members to represent all the organisations in each group. The groups may either be constituted on a geographical basis or they may be composed in such a way as to be roughly equal in membership. Another precaution sometimes taken is to provide that all trades or sections of a trade covered by the organisation concerned shall be adequately represented.

But even these committees and councils do not meet, as a rule, oftener than once a year. This means that much of the power of influencing the work and policy of the international organisations is concentrated in the smaller executive committee or bureau. The Executive of the I.F.T.U., for instance, normally meets six times a year and the General Council only once. The Executive of the L.S.I., which corresponds to the General Council of the I.F.T.U., used to hold two meetings a year, while the smaller Bureau was expected to meet four times.<sup>1</sup> Moreover the meetings of the General Council of the I.F.T.U. have always been preceded by a meeting of the Executive and those of the Executive of the L.S.I. by a meeting of the Bureau.

In the I.F.T.U., then, the real directing force is the Executive, while in the L.S.I. it is the Bureau which exercises the greatest influence. What this means in actual fact is that the decisive power of influencing decisions is wielded by the parties or trade union national centres represented on those two committees. To a large extent the effectiveness with which the power is used depends upon the personalities of the members who represent them.

Taking these bodies as examples it is possible to distinguish between two methods—that of concentrating the executive power into a few hands, and that of endeavouring to provide representation for as many interests as possible.

Thus, the Executive of the I.F.T.U. is not only responsible for the administration of the I.F.T.U. and for the execution of its decisions, but it is also in a position to initiate activities and to influence its line of policy. It is the Executive which submits the report on activities and the programme of action to the General Council, and which prepares the items for the agenda of the International Trade Union Congress. These subjects are dealt with in memoranda drawn up beforehand and are intro-

<sup>1</sup> In most years, however, the Bureau did not meet as often as this.

duced to the Congress in speeches by the members of the Executive selected for the purpose.

Apart from the General Secretary there are only six members of the Executive—the President and five Vice-Presidents. For some years past the President has been a representative of the British trade union movement, while three of the Vice-Presidents have been from France, Belgium and Denmark. Before 1933 another Vice-President was from Germany. On the collapse of the German trade union movement he was replaced by an Austrian, who in turn gave way to a representative of the unions in the Netherlands.<sup>1</sup> The other Vice-President was from Czechoslovakia. In 1939 he too dropped out, owing to the German invasion of Czechoslovakia, and his place was taken by a Swiss. A decision was taken by the 1939 Congress to appoint a sixth Vice-President, but the Congress could not proceed to the actual election as the necessary change had not been made in the rules.

Thus the real power to guide and inspire the I.F.T.U. was centred for a number of years in the representatives of the trade union national centres of Great Britain, France, Belgium, Germany, Scandinavia and Czechoslovakia. A special responsibility rested, therefore, upon the trade union movements of those countries. And, of course, a great deal has depended upon the outlook and ability of the individual members of the Executive and upon their capacity to pull together.

Similarly, the Bureau of the L.S.I. has exercised much of the real power in the counsels of the political International. It is true that the Executive is a more fully representative body and that it is empowered to 'perform the functions of the Congress when Congress is not in session'. But all the important matters that come before the Executive are discussed beforehand at the meetings of the Bureau. The Bureau is given power by the Constitution of the L.S.I. to 'deal with the necessary preparations for the full Executive meetings', and it accordingly recommends the items for inclusion on the agenda of the Executive and disposes of some of them in advance. It has also issued policy statements on its own responsibility on the occasions on which its meetings have not been followed by meetings of the Executive. Those occasions became more frequent in the latter part of the inter-war period. Sometimes the Bureau was enlarged for a meeting when it was felt to be impracticable to summon the full Executive. There were also joint meetings of the Bureau with the Executive of the I.F.T.U. at which decisions were taken on behalf of the two Internationals.

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter IV, p. 160.

From 1923 to 1931 the Bureau of the L.S.I. included representatives of nine countries, in addition to the secretary and treasurer, but by 1939 several more had been added. Members of the Administrative Committee were also entitled to attend the meetings of the Bureau, though they had no power to vote unless they were also members of the Executive. Moreover, it was provided that when matters were to be discussed concerning a country with no direct representation on the Bureau, the Administrative Committee should invite representatives from that country to attend the meeting. Thus, whereas the Executive of the I.F.T.U. was kept down to a convenient size, even at the cost of leaving some of the important countries unrepresented, the Bureau of the L.S.I. was extended from time to time for the purpose of making it more representative.

It was in fact provided that the members of the Bureau should represent 'as many countries as possible', with the proviso that 'due regard should be paid to being able to get them together quickly'. One of the main reasons for setting up the Bureau, indeed, was that there should be in existence a committee which could be 'called together quickly on urgent matters'. This meant in practice that no representatives could be appointed from countries overseas.

Members of the Bureau are appointed by the Executive and must themselves be members of the Executive in order to be eligible. Those appointed at the foundation Congress of the L.S.I. in 1923 were drawn from Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Great Britain, Holland, Italy, Russia and Scandinavia. These were all countries in which the Labour and Socialist movements were of considerable importance, though in Russia the Socialist parties had already been suppressed. At the Congress in 1931 it was decided that the number of members should be increased from nine to eleven, though it was admitted that the capacity of the Bureau for action would in this way be 'rather restricted than increased'.<sup>1</sup> The two additional members then appointed were representatives of the parties in Poland and Czechoslovakia—two countries which were becoming increasingly important in international affairs.

Later two further members were added—one from Spain, in view of the progress of the Spanish Socialist Party and one from Switzerland, where the headquarters of the L.S.I. had been situated from 1925 to 1935. On the transfer of the Secretariat to Belgium the Swiss representative, who had attended the meetings of the Bureau as a member of the Administrative Committee, would have had to withdraw from the Bureau, leav-

<sup>1</sup> *Fourth Congress of the L.S.I., Vienna, 1931, p. 758.*

ing Switzerland unrepresented, if this decision to increase the membership had not been taken.

In May 1939 it was proposed at a meeting of the Executive of the L.S.I. that the Bureau should in future consist only of representatives from countries in which democracy was in existence. Ultimately, however, it was decided that it should be composed of ten representatives from democratic countries and two from countries without democracy. The countries selected were Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Holland, Norway, Poland, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.<sup>1</sup>

Thus the main responsibility for guiding the L.S.I. and shaping its policy has rested with the parties in the most important countries of western, central and northern Europe. The inclusion of representatives from Italy and Russia, and the subsequent addition of others from Poland, Czechoslovakia and Spain enabled the Bureau to draw upon knowledge and experience from countries whose importance in international affairs could not be overlooked. This extended the Bureau beyond the most convenient size for regular and frequent meetings, but it was felt that this drawback should be accepted in order to provide for the expression of as many points of view and national interests as possible. It might have been easier to reach rapid decisions in a smaller committee, but this would have been to increase the risk of ignoring, or even violating, the needs and desires of parties directly affected by those decisions. The danger would seem to be less on the trade union side, where there is a greater similarity in the objects and methods to be pursued, than in the case of the Labour and Socialist parties, who are obliged to give more weight to such factors as political expediency, parliamentary tactics and Government responsibility.

A considerable amount of influence is exercised in many cases by the Secretariat. It is the Secretariat which usually has to take the initiative in calling meetings. The Secretariat has a hand in the drawing up of the agenda and the preparation of the business for the meetings, and is primarily responsible for the elaboration of the necessary reports. Moreover, the Secretariat is in the best position to maintain contact with the affiliated organisations and to follow developments in the different countries. It not only collects and records information but it is also the channel for its dissemination through such publications as press reports and bulletins.

Much therefore depends upon the outlook and activities of

<sup>1</sup> *International Information*, Brussels, 1939, pp. 257, 307.

the secretary and his collaborators. The general secretary of the I.F.T.U. or the L.S.I. is in one of the key positions in the international labour movement. So is the general secretary of one of the great International Trade Secretariats. When he is a man of great vigour and outstanding personality, such as the late Edo Fimmen of the I.T.F., his influence may be profound indeed. The secretary, however, needs to be supported by an adequate body of collaborators and assistants. International co-operation cannot be confined to such activities as the occasional exchange of greetings telegrams and the delivery of speeches of good will. It needs to be carried on systematically and continuously.

This is not the least important problem of organisation in the international labour movement. More people are needed to devote themselves for a period of years to full-time work in this sphere, and more funds are needed to finance the work. A knowledge of languages is an indispensable qualification but it is not the only one. An international outlook is also required—in other words, a capacity to approach international problems not from the point of view of defending or advancing national interests only, but with the object of securing the greatest possible measure of progress for all the countries concerned. Nor is it sufficient for those engaged in international work to have a general feeling of sympathy and friendship for people of other countries; they need in addition a sound basis of knowledge, which can only be acquired by study and experience.

### *c. Relations between the International Organisations*

How is the work of the international labour movement to be divided up? What organisations are needed for this work and what are to be the relations between them? As already indicated,<sup>1</sup> there is a broad general division between the political activities of bodies such as the L.S.I. and the International of Socialist Youth on the one hand, and the industrial activities of the I.F.T.U. and the International Trade Secretariats on the other—though there are many questions which have to be dealt with in common. On the trade union side a rough distinction can be drawn between the interests of the I.F.T.U. and those of the Trade Secretariats, between industrial and social questions of general concern and those of particular application to specific industries—though here again the interests overlap. It is also possible to distinguish a number of subjects which can well be handled by separate organisations or special committees.

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter III, p. 75, and Chapter IV, p. 117.

Generally speaking, then, the position of the various organisations within the framework of the international labour movement is fairly clearly defined. The problem, in the main, is one of co-ordination rather than of eliminating organisations competing in the same field. Relations between the specialised organisations (such as the International of Socialist Youth and the Workers' Wireless International) and the L.S.I. or the I.F.T.U., are covered by the arrangements for mutual representation at meetings and conferences and by consultation between the respective secretariats. The most difficult problems are presented by the intermingling of the interests of the L.S.I. and the I.F.T.U. and by the necessity of co-ordinating the activities of the I.F.T.U. with those of the Trade Secretariats.

As between the L.S.I. and the I.F.T.U. the problem is essentially one of co-ordination. There has been no question of combining the two organisations, because although some of their interests are common the elements which comprise the two Internationals are entirely different. The trade unions in the various countries, and the Labour and Socialist parties are separate and distinct—even though there are a few cases in which the organic connection is very close. Two different organisations are therefore needed to represent them.

In its constitution the L.S.I. specifically recognises the I.F.T.U. and expresses its desire to co-operate with that body.<sup>1</sup> But neither the constitution of the L.S.I. nor the rules of the I.F.T.U. provide for the establishment of any standing committee or other authority to co-ordinate the activities of the two Internationals. Common action is discussed at joint meetings and conferences called as occasion demands, or by joint committees set up for special purposes.<sup>2</sup> So far there has been no demand for any permanent machinery of co-ordination. Given the desire to co-operate it should be possible to deal with most problems through joint meetings and *ad hoc* joint committees. It might, however, be found advisable at some future date to establish a standing joint body of some kind, in view of the large number of questions in which the two Internationals are interested.

Much more difficult has been the problem of regulating the relations between the I.F.T.U. and the International Trade Secretariats. Here there are two questions to consider—the necessity for co-ordination and the demand for a closer organic relationship.

<sup>1</sup> There is a similar provision relating to the International Co-operative Alliance.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter III, p. 100.



Co-ordination has been under discussion ever since the re-establishment of the I.F.T.U. in 1919 and various methods of ensuring effective collaboration between the I.F.T.U. and the Trade Secretariats have been considered and tried.<sup>1</sup> Arrangements for co-ordination must be based on the assumption that though the collaborating organisations have certain interests in common each of them is competent to decide for itself on matters arising in its own particular sphere. That is the basis for the provisions in force down to the outbreak of war. The joint conferences of the International Trade Secretariats organised by the I.F.T.U. provided an opportunity for the discussion of questions of importance to the Trade Secretariats, while the presence of representatives of the Trade Secretariats at the General Council meetings and congresses of the I.F.T.U. enabled the Trade Secretariats to gain an insight into the problems and policies of the I.F.T.U. As a result of these arrangements it was hoped that the I.F.T.U., when dealing with questions of general concern, would have the benefit of the advice of representatives from different industries, and that the Trade Secretariats, when handling the problems of their respective trades, would act in accordance with the policy of the international trade union movement as a whole.

So far these arrangements seem to have given the most satisfaction. A decision of the Vienna Congress in 1924, that three representatives of the Trade Secretariats should sit on the General Council of the I.F.T.U. was reversed in 1927 because of a feeling that the Trade Secretariats as a whole could not be adequately represented by delegates from only three of them.<sup>2</sup> The experiment of appointing a Co-ordination Committee of the I.F.T.U. and the Trade Secretariats, which was set on foot in 1934, was likewise abandoned three years later, on the ground that the committee had not brought about any material improvement.<sup>3</sup>

There remains the problem of evolving a new form of organisation. The various proposals discussed during the period between the two wars aimed at changing the form of the I.F.T.U. by basing it entirely on the Trade Secretariats or by incorporating the Trade Secretariats in the existing structure. The discussion has continued during the war and a committee was set up by the I.F.T.U. and the Trade Secretariats in 1942 to consider the matter further.<sup>4</sup> There is much to be said for the adoption of a

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter IV, p. 159.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter IV, p. 160.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter IV, p. 165.

<sup>4</sup> See Chapter II, p. 55.

closer form of organisation, but any proposals for absorbing the Trade Secretariats into the I.F.T.U., or for making them into subordinate bodies, are bound to meet with resistance from the Secretariats, some of which are powerful organisations in their own right.<sup>1</sup>

Alternatives to the formation of a new organisation, incorporating the I.F.T.U. and all the Trade Secretariats, would be the amalgamation of a number of Secretariats, the formation of groups of Secretariats in kindred trades, or the concentration of the offices and services of a number of these organisations at one world trade union headquarters. Some of the Trade Secretariats are too small to play any vital part in the international labour movement. There are, for example, Trade Secretariats in a few industries in which the number of workers employed is relatively low, or in industries which do not enter to any great extent into international trade. Such bodies find it difficult to provide themselves with the funds, the staff and the organisation required for effective international action. There are also Trade Secretariats in industries that are fairly closely related. A number of these organisations might find their power of action considerably increased if their forces could be combined.

On the other hand, there are International Trade Secretariats in great and important industries. Some of these industries are largely international in character and structure, or depend to a considerable extent upon international trade for their prosperity. Among the industries which employ large numbers of workers and therefore provide a basis for a substantial trade union membership, are the building industry and the general factory trades. Industries which figure prominently in international trade include iron and steel, the coal industry and textiles, while transport, including shipping, is, of course, one of the agencies with which international trade and commerce are conducted. It is in these industries that some of the biggest International Trade Secretariats are to be found. Before Hitler came to power the Trade Secretariats for the miners, metal workers and transport workers each had over a million members,<sup>2</sup> and those representing the factory workers and textile workers each had over half a million. At this time the building and wood workers were in two separate organisations, but after their amalgamation they too passed the half million mark.

While these are amongst the largest Trade Secretariats there is still scope for a considerable increase in their membership. Moreover, it is in the 'international' industries that international

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 218.

<sup>2</sup> At one time the I.T.F. had over two and a half million members.

action can most effectively be developed. In these industries the wages and conditions of labour in any country are most directly affected by those in other countries. And in such cases international action can most easily have recognisable results. The Trade Secretariats in such industries might therefore have good reasons for objecting to absorption in a wider form of organisation.

Before the war several of the Trade Secretariats had succeeded in amalgamating and in a few other cases amalgamation discussions were going forward.<sup>1</sup> It must be anticipated that negotiations with a view to amalgamation will in due course be resumed, but however desirable the fusion of certain of the Trade Secretariats may appear, the change cannot be thrust upon them. Proposals for amalgamation involve difficult decisions regarding transfer of membership, disposal of funds, membership of committees, and the position of officers and staff. Two organisations will only amalgamate, therefore, when both are freely prepared to take such a step. The decision cannot be imposed upon them by the vote of other organisations in the labour movement, even when the case for amalgamation would seem to be overwhelming.

There are, however, the other possibilities of grouping and concentration of offices. The formation of groups of Trade Secretariats in certain trades, large and small, would seem to offer considerable advantages from the point of view of propaganda and even of joint action. The Joint Council formed in 1943 by the International Transportworkers' Federation, the Miners' International Federation and the British Section of the International Metal Workers' Federation for the purpose of carrying on propaganda to Germany and the occupied countries of Europe, should provide valuable experience in this field. If instead of twenty-seven separate organisations there could be half a dozen groups, the power and drive of the Trade Secretariats might be considerably increased. In matters of general policy the Trade Secretariats would, of course, be bound by the conferences of Trade Secretariats, and by the decisions of the I.F.T.U. to which they had consented, but within each group the Secretariats could lend each other mutual support and pursue common lines of action.

Concentration of offices and services would be most likely to benefit the smaller Secretariats. Attempts made by the I.F.T.U. to bring together under one roof the offices of the Secretariats which were obliged to remove their headquarters from Germany in 1933 met with little success.<sup>2</sup> Only one Secretariat, indeed,

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter IV, p. 155.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter IV, p. 163.

agreed to set up its offices in the building to which the I.F.T.U. itself removed in Paris. The idea of combining the offices and staffs of a number of the Trade Secretariats has not, however, been dropped. If such a combination could be achieved, it is argued that there would be an appreciable saving in expense and a substantial improvement in efficiency. Before the war it was affirmed that because of their precarious finances some of the Trade Secretariats had neither the staff nor the technical facilities for effective service. By joining forces at a single centre it may well be that a number of the Secretariats might be able to share the services of a competent staff of interpreters and translators, to pool their research and information facilities, and perhaps to collaborate in the publication of press bulletins and journals. But financial economy and technical efficiency are not the only factors to be taken into consideration. Much would depend upon the suitability of the suggested headquarters town as a centre of the labour movement, an accessible meeting place, and a place of residence for the secretaries and staffs and their families. It is unlikely that all the Trade Secretariats would agree to transfer their headquarters to one common centre—and it may indeed be undesirable—though it is quite possible that a number of them would be willing to base themselves upon a few towns in Britain or other countries of western Europe.

## 2. RELATIONS WITH THE NATIONAL CENTRES

The problems arising out of the relationship between the international organisations and their sections in the various countries relate to such questions as the autonomy of the national sections, the observance of international decisions, the duties of the national sections and the differences between the situations in the respective countries.

### *a. National Autonomy*

In view of the fact that the international organisations are based on national sections, and that those sections insist on autonomy in their respective countries, the problem arises of how to combine a respect for the position of the national organisations with effective action on an international plane.

In various ways the constitution of the L.S.I., the rules of the I.F.T.U., and the rules of some of the Trade Secretariats clearly safeguard the autonomy of the affiliated parties or unions. This is a recognition of the principle that the last word as to what should be said or done in a country must rest with the organisa-

tions in the country itself. The rule may definitely provide, as in the case of the I.F.T.U., that the autonomy of the affiliated organisations is 'guaranteed'. Or the protection may be implicit, as in the L.S.I., whose constitution, while declaring that the resolutions of the International imply that there must be a limitation upon the autonomy of the affiliated organisations, admits that the limitation must be 'self-imposed'.

It would be useless to pretend that, as at present constituted, these international organisations could impose their will upon their constituent national bodies and that the decisions of the international committees and conferences are instructions which the national sections are obliged to obey. On the other hand, it must be assumed that a serious attempt will be made to put international decisions into effect. Otherwise there would be little purpose in hammering out international plans and policies. Unless action in the various countries follows upon decision in international assemblies, the international bodies can be little more than correspondence bureaux for the transmission of information from country to country or debating societies for the exchange of ideas and opinions.

Some of the international bodies attempt to impose duties and obligations upon their affiliated organisations by rule. There is, however, some difficulty in prescribing duties in other than general terms. The constitution of the L.S.I. assumes that the affiliated parties will voluntarily accept the desired obligations. It declares that the L.S.I. is as essential in war as in peace, and that in conflicts between nations the International is to be recognised as the 'highest authority'. It also affirms that the L.S.I. can only become a reality 'if its decisions in all international questions are binding on its affiliated bodies'. But it does not lay down any hard-and-fast obligation to observe these decisions.

These matters cannot be disposed of merely by the adoption of rules. Even if the affiliated organisations agreed to accept the authority of the international bodies as binding they would be continually confronted with circumstances in which the obligation would be unreal. But even in times of crisis it is quite possible for the organisations in the labour movement to decide upon international action in support of international law, particularly if the Governments of the leading States are themselves prepared to take a stand. Dr. Adler, Secretary of the L.S.I., reminded the Labour Party Conference in Brighton in 1935, after the Conference had adopted a resolution calling for sanctions against Italy, that the international action then being taken by the workers' organisations was 'facilitated to an enormous extent' by the fact that it was action in support of the League of

Nations. But while emphasising that for the first time in history practical measures were being taken by the labour movement in the face of a danger of war, Dr. Adler warned the Conference against illusions. The 'terrible convulsion' which the labour movement experienced during the war of 1914-1918 was principally due to the fact that the workers at that time 'had had exaggerated ideas as to the strength of the International'.<sup>1</sup> It was clear, however, from what Dr. Adler said, that the action of the League of Nations in resisting Italy's policy in Abyssinia had provided the international labour movement with an opportunity to make a real contribution to the defence of peace.

One of the tragedies of the inter-war period was that the labour movements and the Governments of the various countries were too seldom in agreement, and that during the recurring economic and political crises the Governments themselves were too often unable to agree. In the prevailing circumstances it was impossible for any of the international organisations to insist upon the strict observance of their decisions. There is often a difference between what the international organisations of the labour movement might like to do in a given situation and what the Governments of particular countries may be willing to do. If the trade unions or Socialist parties in those countries have a direct responsibility towards their Governments, they may find it difficult to agree with international decisions which might bring them into conflict with their Ministers. In such circumstances they tend to fall back upon their autonomy. Unfortunately such complications are most likely to arise in times of crisis, when international agreement and action are needed more than ever. Whatever the rules may provide, therefore, conditions in the international sphere, or in the different countries, may make the observance of international decisions an extremely delicate matter.

It has been suggested that the national bodies should be able to exercise their autonomy only in matters concerning their own countries,<sup>2</sup> and that the decisions of the international organisations should be binding in regard to international questions. But in practice the distinction does not arise. Questions which are of purely national concern tend to become less numerous, and in any case such matters are not the subject of international decisions. On the other hand, trade unions and Socialist parties, for example, are frequently obliged to take action in their own countries on questions that are definitely international, or on domestic issues that may have international repercussions. More-

<sup>1</sup> *Thirty-fifth Annual Conference of the Labour Party, Brighton, 1935*, p. 194.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter IV, p. 132.

over, when a matter is actually decided by one of the international bodies the execution of the decision is largely a matter of action in the individual countries. It is precisely at this point that the right to autonomy is most important to the national sections. Even if a clear division could be made, therefore, between international and national questions, the principle of national autonomy would still be invoked.

It is unlikely that the trade unions and Socialist parties will willingly agree to abandon any substantial part of their autonomy and to place themselves under the orders of international organisations. In fact, it will be as difficult for them to agree to far-reaching restrictions upon their right of decision as it will be for States to accept serious limitations on their national sovereignty. The difficulty may even be increased rather than diminished if the international organisations in the labour movement secure wider affiliations in countries overseas. A trade union or a Labour party in the United States, in South America or in one of the Dominions would have even greater reason for caution in this matter, in view of their remoteness from the European centre of the international labour movement. Indeed, this very problem of national autonomy was one of the issues raised by the American Federation of Labour when the I.F.T.U. was being restarted in 1919.<sup>1</sup>

Accordingly, it is not merely a question of devising machinery, or of introducing penalties for the non-observance of international decisions. It is not so much a matter of rules and regulations as of the voluntranly acceptance by the national bodies of the implications of international co-operation. If the national sections want the international organisations to function effectively, if they desire to obtain the highest benefit from international collaboration for their respective countries, they must themselves pay more attention to the action that should follow from international decisions. While it is important to remember that the deteriorating political and economic situation in the world made international co-operation increasingly difficult, it is also true to say that many of the organisations in the labour movement failed to attach sufficient importance to international effort and neglected to make full use of the international machinery which they had built up. In particular they too often underestimated the need to keep their own members adequately informed about international discussions and to secure wide publicity for international decisions. In future much greater weight will need to be given to this vital work of education and enlightenment.

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter IV, p. 131.

Another important implication of membership of an international organisation is that before a national body comes to a decision on an international problem, or on a home problem of international significance, it should arrange wherever possible for the matter to be discussed internationally. Where a full meeting of the international bodies is impracticable an effort should at least be made to consult the organisations in the countries most likely to be affected. This willingness to consult, to ascertain facts, to seek guidance on the possible repercussions of a suggested course of action, lies at the root of international co-operation. It is one thing to come to a conclusion based on previous international decisions, or to apply the terms of international resolutions to a given set of circumstances; it is quite another thing to make a unilateral pronouncement on a new issue or on a principle not already sanctioned after international discussion. If this is a limitation of national autonomy it is one that the national organisations should have relatively little difficulty in accepting, given a genuine desire to co-operate for the greatest common benefit.

The need to respect the position of the national sections increases the difficulty of reaching international decisions. In some circumstances it may delay international action or even prevent it. But though it may thus reduce the positive activities of the international organisations it often results in their avoiding action that would be mistaken. Through international discussion the affiliated organisations are able to inform one another as to the position in their respective countries, the probable effects of a given decision and the action which they could or could not agree to take. It may sometimes transpire that an apparently reasonable suggestion might be regarded in some countries as embarrassing, ill-timed, too far-reaching or even so dangerous as to be completely unacceptable. If proposals can be modified to meet such objections, or if they are sometimes dropped altogether, that is a negative advantage that must be thrown into the scales. The effects of international co-operation are to be measured not only by what is said and done, but by what is not said and done, not only by the good that is achieved but by the harm that is avoided.

It is no easy matter to reach international decisions and at the same time to respect the autonomy of the national organisations, even when conditions are most favourable. The attempt only succeeds if the national organisations are prepared to come part of the way to meet each other. It is not always a case of choosing between a lofty international ideal and the narrow, selfish interests of separate countries. Every international question



arises in, or in connection with, a given country or group of countries; and it is of more interest to some countries than to others. In dealing with international questions, therefore, whether in the labour movement or in other fields, the representatives of the various countries must weigh their desire to further their own national ends against the need to give and take for the general good of all the countries concerned. Thus, although international action would be impossible if each national organisation claimed an absolute right to pursue its own course irrespective of the needs of others, it does not follow that there is an overriding international interest to which they may be expected to give way. International policies are at bottom a fusion of national policies, achieved by a compromise between the concern of the different countries for their separate national interests and their willingness to co-operate for the common good.

#### *b. Observance of International Decisions*

Once an international decision has been reached it is understood that the affiliated organisations will make an effort to carry it out. This, however, is essentially a self-imposed obligation. Although some of the international organisations in the labour movement specifically refer to the observance of international decisions in their rules, there is no effective machinery of enforcement. So far the national organisations have been unwilling to adopt rules that would lay them open to penalties for non-observance, and there is no supreme international authority with power to enforce its will upon them.

Hence there are no provisions in the rules of these international organisations that would enable sanctions to be applied in the event of failure to carry out a decision of one of the international committees or conferences. Here there is a striking difference between the trade union and Socialist organisations on the one hand, and the Communist organisations on the other. The Communist International, for instance, expected implicit obedience from the Communist parties and their members. Its decisions were binding upon all its national sections and were to be promptly carried out.

One of the fundamental principles upon which the Communist International and its sections were based was that decisions of 'superior Party committees' were to be 'obligatory' for subordinate committees. There was to be 'strict Party discipline and prompt execution of the decisions of the Communist International, of its leading committees, and of the leading Party

organs'. Party questions could be discussed until a Party decision was taken, but once a decision had been reached by the Communist International or one of its Parties, it was to be 'unreservedly carried out', even if a section of the Party was in disagreement with it.<sup>1</sup>

These principles were given greater precision in the provisions relating to the Executive Committee of the Communist International (E.C.C.I.). The decisions of the E.C.C.I., said the constitution, 'are obligatory for all Sections of the Communist International and must be promptly carried out'. Sections had a right of appeal to the World Congress, but had to carry out the decisions until the appeal could be heard. The E.C.C.I. had the right 'to annul or amend' decisions of Party Congresses and Central Committees, and also 'to make decisions which are obligatory for them'. It had power to expel from the Communist International 'entire Sections, groups and individual members' for violating the programme and rules of the Communist International or the decisions of the World Congress and of the E.C.C.I. The programmes of the various national sections had to be 'endorsed' by the E.C.C.I. and 'all the decisions and official documents of the E.C.C.I.' had to be published in the 'leading organs' of the Communist parties and if possible in the 'other organs of the Party Press' as well.

Congresses of the Communist parties could only be held if the consent of the E.C.C.I. had first been obtained. Resignations from office were regarded as 'disruption of the Communist Movement'. Leading positions in the Communist parties did not belong to their occupants 'but to the Communist International as a whole'. Elected members of the central committees could only resign with the consent of the E.C.C.I., and resignations accepted without the consent of the E.C.C.I. were 'invalid'.

Rules of this kind would have been completely unacceptable to the organisations of the labour and Socialist movement. They were possible in the Communist International because the Communists were prepared to regard that body as the 'leader and organiser of the world revolutionary movement of the proletariat'. This meant, in effect, accepting the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, whose influence in the Communist International was predominant. Soviet Russia was the hope and inspiration of Communists all over the world, and they wished to defend it as a base for further advances. In international affairs, therefore, the Communist parties felt that the interests of the Soviet Union were paramount. They were

<sup>1</sup> *Constitution and Rules of the Communist International*—See *Forty-Second Annual Conference of the Labour Party, London, 1943, Appendix II.*

ready at all times to pursue whatever policy appeared to be necessary for the support of the Soviet Union, even if it failed to respond to the needs of the situation in their own countries. In fact, they were making their allegiance to the Soviet Union an overriding international interest and were submitting themselves to the will of a supreme international authority. Such an attitude on the part of the labour and Socialist organisations and the free trade unions would have been impossible.

No national section of the L.S.I., the I.F.T.U., or the other organisations of the labour movement can be forced to carry out international decisions that it considers to be inopportune or inadvisable in its own country. None of these international bodies can order its national sections to observe its decisions, nor even insist upon their publication. Nor can bodies such as the L.S.I. and the I.F.T.U. 'annul or amend' decisions which their national sections take for themselves. The programmes and policies of the national sections do not have to be submitted to the international bodies for approval. Reports on activities are expected from the national sections at intervals but there is no power to ensure that they shall be forthcoming. None of these international organisations is able to replace the leaders or committees of its national sections or compel them to remain in office. The international organisations of the labour movement are free associations of autonomous national organisations for the promotion of common interests. Their work is based upon the principle of voluntary co-operation and not upon that of subordination to a higher authority.

There is only one serious penalty that can be imposed, and that is expulsion. But this penalty is only invoked in extreme cases. National organisations have sometimes been expelled, or simply 'dropped', for failure to pay their affiliation fees. It is also possible for an organisation to be expelled for activities incompatible with membership of the international body to which it is affiliated, as, for example, when the Socialist Youth Federation in Spain was disaffiliated from the International of Socialist Youth for its association with the young Communists.<sup>1</sup> But it would be very unusual for an organisation to be expelled for failing to show sufficient zeal in carrying out international decisions, or even for advocating in its own country a policy substantially different from that which had already been adopted internationally. Expulsion is a double-edged weapon. It may injure the international organisation as well as the section expelled. These organisations are anxious to extend their affiliations to all the countries of the world, and the loss of an already

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter III, p. 96.

affiliated body might therefore be a serious matter. In the circumstances iron discipline and drastic penalties are not to be expected.

International decisions may involve action by the international organisations themselves or they may call for action by others. Examples of actions by the organisations themselves would include the raising of funds for relief, the organisation of campaigns in the press and by means of public meetings, the collection of signatures to a petition, or the sending of delegations to, say, meetings of the League of Nations. In such cases the action taken is entirely a matter for the organs of the International and its national sections. Decisions involving action by others would include resolutions calling upon the national sections to urge their Governments or parliaments to adopt a given policy or pursue a suggested course of action. In these cases the success of the action would depend upon the influence which the International and its sections could exert upon others. To a certain extent, then, the observance of international decisions depends upon the machinery of the international organisation itself, and particularly upon the power and efficiency of its secretariat. But in the main it depends upon the national sections. And these are influenced less by the rules of the international bodies than by the possibilities which exist in their own countries and by the importance which they themselves attach to international action.

Even after allowances have been made for all these difficulties, it cannot be denied that much greater weight could be placed behind international decisions if the national sections were determined to make full use of the possibilities. Though this is first and foremost a matter for such bodies as the trade unions and Socialist parties in the various countries it is also a problem of organisation for the international bodies. After an international conference or committee meeting the delegates return to their own countries, taking the international decisions with them. It is then for their organisations at home to decide what action, if any, they will take in pursuance of those decisions. Meanwhile the international secretariat is left to carry out its own part of whatever has been decided. When the next international gathering takes place it will meet in different circumstances, probably to discuss a new set of problems.

Under such conditions it is difficult to maintain continuity. None of the affiliated organisations, nor even the international secretariat, has a very clear picture of the extent to which the earlier decisions have been carried out in the various countries. Reports on the activities of the organisations in the different countries, and of the work of the international body itself, are

considered at annual meetings or at the conferences or congresses held every two or three years. But it is not usual to make a detailed examination of the action taken in pursuance of the international decisions, country by country.

Here it might be advisable for the international organisations to consider the appointment of special committees to examine reports from the affiliated organisations and the secretariat on the execution of international decisions. Such committees could meet at frequent intervals and submit their conclusions and recommendations to the annual or half-yearly meetings of the international organisations. Their examination would not be conducted with a view to criticism or fault-finding but in a spirit of enquiry. Successes achieved in the various countries would be noted, but so also would the difficulties encountered. The reports of these committees would give the affiliated organisations an idea of the progress made in the various countries and would provide a useful guide to the international bodies on the effectiveness of their work. Information on the results of international effort is, of course, already given by the international organisations in the ordinary way, but these organisations would probably find it an advantage to make the observance of their decisions the subject of detailed and systematic enquiry at regular intervals.

### *c. Duties of Affiliated Organisations*

Few of the international organisations in the labour movement include a precise statement of the duties of affiliated national sections in their rules. Many of them only refer to the matter in general terms. In all cases it is assumed, if it is not explicitly stated, that the national sections will pay the prescribed affiliation fees, accept the constitution and resolutions of the international organisation and take no action that is incompatible with its policy. These, however, are obvious duties which hardly require to be defined.

Neither the constitution of the L.S.I. nor the rules of the I.F.T.U. contain a specific rule governing the duties of the affiliated parties or national centres. Examples of such rules are to be found, however, amongst the International Trade Secretariats. An article of the constitution of the International Union of Federations of Workers engaged in the Food and Drink Trades provides that it is the duty of the affiliated organisations to notify the international secretary of forthcoming conferences, to report their decisions and to supply the names of the officers elected; to supply copies of their official publications and reports;

to furnish information annually on all important events of interest to the International Union; 'to reply promptly to all enquiries from the secretariat'; and to pay their affiliation fee every six months.<sup>1</sup>

A similar rule has been adopted by the International Transportworkers' Federation. It provides that the affiliated organisations shall 'propagate and carry out the decisions of the I.T.F. in their own countries'; report to the I.T.F. the dates of their conferences, the decisions taken and the names of the persons elected; and supply copies of their journal and annual report, as well as statistics of membership and other necessary information.<sup>2</sup>

Further rules of these and other organisations relate to the action to be taken in support of affiliated unions involved in strikes or lock-outs and to the conditions to be fulfilled by those who wish to qualify for such assistance.<sup>3</sup>

There is, as a rule, no machinery for ensuring that these obligations are carried out. Unions which fail to give the necessary information on the outbreak of a strike or lock-out may find that financial assistance from the other organisations is delayed or withheld. On the other hand, there is no means of compelling the other organisations to subscribe in proportion to their resources, or indeed to subscribe at all. There is, however, a rule of the I.T.F. on the subject of appeals for practical help. After investigation the I.T.F. is willing to ask its organisations to support an affiliated union engaged in a conflict 'by means of a sympathetic strike, by practising passive resistance or by proclaiming a boycott'. Should an organisation feel unable to 'follow up the advice given and suggestions made' it has 'to account for its attitude' to the I.T.F. Executive and the International Congress.

Generally speaking there are no penalties for omitting to supply information, to publish international resolutions or to carry out any of the other positive duties of affiliated organisations, though expulsion or loss of certain rights may follow in the event of failure to pay affiliation fees. It is, however, always understood that penalties may be imposed for action taken *against* the interests of the international organisation. Here again the penalty is expulsion. The rules of the I.F.T.U., for example, provide that national centres which are more than twelve months in arrears with their affiliation fees may only be allowed to take

<sup>1</sup> *Constitution of the International Union of Federations of Workers in the Food and Drink Trades*, Genossenschaftsdruckerei, Zurich, 1929.

<sup>2</sup> *Constitution of the International Transportworkers' Federation*, I.T.F. Amsterdam, 1930.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter II, p. 60.

part in the proceedings of congresses or meetings with the consent of the General Council of the I.F.T.U., and that they may in no circumstances be allowed the right to vote. National centres may be expelled (a) if they fail to pay their affiliation fees after repeated reminders, and (b) if they are guilty of 'serious violations of the rules or resolutions' of the I.F.T.U.<sup>1</sup>

Similar rules are to be found amongst the International Trade Secretariats. In a number of cases these rules provide that affiliated unions may be expelled for failure to pay affiliation fees in spite of repeated applications and for acting 'against the interests' of the Trade Secretariat concerned.<sup>2</sup>

It is a question whether anything substantial is gained by the inclusion of a precise definition of duties in the rules. The extent of the international co-operation secured is very much the same whether the obligations are set out in detail or not. There is, however, something to be said for including a general rule on the subject of duties for the guidance of members and officials of affiliated organisations. What matters most, of course, is that the obligations of affiliation to an international body should be well understood and freely accepted. At bottom these are very simple. Apart from the obvious duty to pay affiliation fees they are: to supply the fullest possible information to the international organisation; to follow closely the work of the affiliated bodies in other countries; to be fully represented at international meetings and conferences, as far as circumstances will allow; to secure adequate publicity for international decisions and activities; and to make a serious effort to put international decisions into effect. Implied in all this is a duty that is too often overlooked, namely, the duty to be properly organised for carrying out these activities.<sup>3</sup>

#### d. *Differences in National Circumstances*

One of the most serious problems of organisation for bodies such as the L.S.I., the I.F.T.U., and the International Trade Secretariats has arisen from the wide differences in the circumstances of their national sections. It is only to be expected that the affiliated organisations will differ in their degree of develop-

<sup>1</sup> *Statutes of the International Federation of Trade Unions*, Paris, 1935.

<sup>2</sup> *Constitution of the International Transportworkers' Federation*, I.T.F., Amsterdam, 1930. *Rules of the International Metal Workers' Federation*, I.M.F., 1921. *Rules of the International Federation of Building and Wood Workers. Adopted by the First International Building and Wood Workers' Congress, London, 14 and 15 July, 1936.* I.B.W.W., Amsterdam, 1937. *Rules of the International Federation of Textile Workers' Associations. Adopted by the 16th International Congress at Stockholm, July 1939.* I.F.T.W.A., 1939.

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 170.

ment, in size and importance and in their national characteristics. But these difficulties are seriously aggravated by the fact that whereas some of the national sections can function in comparative freedom others are in constant conflict with the State and others again compelled to carry on their activities as underground organisations represented by groups of emigrés.

Effective international action can hardly be expected in the absence of organisations able to function in the different countries. The problem in countries in which trade unions or Socialist parties are still in their beginnings is different from that in States in which they have been driven underground. The need to regulate the position of clandestine organisations and emigré groups in relation to the international bodies throws up a series of problems of organisation which take up much of the time of the international meetings and conferences.<sup>1</sup> Affiliation fees from these countries are reduced; in fact it may even be necessary to raise funds for the support of the underground organisations and for the individual victims of persecution. In the countries in which the organisations have been suppressed there is no possibility of serious action in pursuance of international decisions. The whole effort of the movement in those countries, and of its representatives abroad, is absorbed in a struggle for the overthrow of the prevailing régime and the restoration of the right of labour organisations to exist. The immediate needs of the underground organisations are different from those of the 'legal' parties and unions, and so often are their views as to the long-range possibilities. These differences, of course, find expression at international meetings and increase the difficulty of reaching international agreement.

To such complications must be added the weaknesses due to the backward state of organisation in certain countries and regions. Sometimes the failure to develop substantial organisations has been largely due to the state of organisation and development in the country itself. The degree of industrialisation, the proportion of peasants and farmers to industrial workers, the general level of culture—all these are factors influencing the growth of working-class organisation. This is clear enough in the case of colonial territories, but it is also true of the countries of, say, South America and even of Europe. Considerable attention has been given by the international labour movement to the problem of developing organisation in the countries which lag behind.<sup>2</sup> In future this may need to be one of their major preoccupations.

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter III, p. 83, and Chapter IV, p. 137.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter III, p. 84, and Chapter IV, p. 136.



More serious has been the repressive action of certain Governments. There are countries in which the persecution of the labour movement has stopped short of actual suppression, but in which it has nevertheless gone far enough to prevent the movement from becoming a constructive force. This has happened not only in a number of countries in Europe but also overseas. But the international labour movement cannot be expected to play a larger and more positive part in ensuring peace and progress if its foundations are undermined in the different countries. One of the essential conditions for peace and progress, indeed, is that the workers should enjoy freedom of association everywhere. If the international labour movement is to carry out its future constructive tasks effectively there will be need to be strong and well-run trade unions and working-class parties at least in all the countries in Europe. It will also be necessary to bring about a considerable extension of the labour movement overseas. In this connection the Declaration of Philadelphia is of some significance. This 'Declaration of the aims and purposes of the International Labour Organisation and of the principles which should inspire the policy of its Members' was unanimously adopted by the International Labour Conference, held at Philadelphia in April-May 1944 and attended by delegations representing Governments, workers and employers from 41 States Members of the I.L.O. In the Declaration the Conference reaffirmed that 'freedom of expression and of association are essential to sustained progress' and that 'the war against want requires to be carried on with unrelenting vigour within each nation, and by continuous and concerted international effort in which the representatives of workers and employers, enjoying equal status with those of Governments, join with them in free discussion and democratic decision with a view to the promotion of the common welfare'. Amongst the programmes which the Declaration envisaged was the following: 'The effective recognition of the right of collective bargaining, the co-operation of management and labour in the continuous improvement of productive efficiency, and the collaboration of workers and employers in the preparation and application of social and economic measures.' All this implies that the workers should be able to form organisations of their own choice and that those organisations should be fully recognised by employers and Governments.

### 3. EXTENSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

The problem of extending the organisation of the international labour movement is one of securing the affiliation of trade unions and labour parties already in existence and of promoting the growth of labour movements in countries in which they are still undeveloped. Particularly important—and particularly difficult—is the question of relations with organisations in countries outside Europe.

Generally speaking the L.S.I., the International of Socialist Youth, the I.F.T.U. and the Trade Secretariats had secured the affiliation of most of the eligible organisations in Europe itself. In the case of the L.S.I., the Youth International and the I.F.T.U., there was usually only one organisation from a country and very few European countries were unrepresented. The situation was a little more difficult for the Trade Secretariats, as these were based not on national centres but on individual unions. Here there were rather more gaps to fill, because in some of the countries not all the eligible unions had affiliated. There was a rule of the I.F.T.U., which charged the national trade union centres with the duty of urging their constituent unions to link up with their appropriate Trade Secretariats.<sup>1</sup> No doubt this rule will be invoked once more when the organisations begin to reconstruct themselves after the war.

In order to secure new affiliations, therefore, the organisations of the international labour movement will have to look overseas. It is in the extra-European countries, too, that the main work of building up new organisations will have to be done. There is, of course, the problem of those organisations in Europe itself whose growth has been retarded by repression. But that has now become part of a wider problem. As a result of the war the labour movement has been heavily damaged in Europe generally. It is still strong in Great Britain, Sweden, and Switzerland; it lived on openly in some of the countries allied to Germany; and it survived in clandestine forms in the countries under German occupation. But after the war the whole of the European labour movement will need to be rebuilt, and in that work of reconstruction the task of developing the backward organisations will fall into its place. Problems concerning the structure of the labour movement within the different countries will also call for attention. One problem, in particular, is whether the labour movement can command a wider support from organisations representing peasants and farmers as well as from

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter IV, p. 154.

industrial workers. This question of the relations between workers in industry and agriculture is of vital importance to the movement's future development.

It is a fact that the international organisations of the labour movement have been largely European not only in structure but in outlook. There was nothing really surprising in this, although it was to be regretted. The international labour movement has had to pass through its stages of development. Europe was its birthplace, it grew up against a European background, and European organisations were always its main source of strength and inspiration. Moreover, although the international organisations of the labour movement were conscious of world problems and constantly referred to them in their pronouncements, they were more nearly concerned with the problems which arose for them in Europe itself. It was only natural that they should approach these questions primarily from a European point of view.

But the responsibility for widening the organisation and outlook of the international labour movement is not one for the European organisations alone. In spite of the serious practical difficulties in the way of close collaboration between European and extra-European organisations there were quite a number of trade unions and labour or Socialist parties overseas that could have affiliated to one of the international bodies had they so desired. Some of these organisations, of course, have been affiliated for years, but some have dropped out, some have only come in comparatively recently, and some have always remained aloof. The European organisations would have welcomed closer relations with the parties and unions in other parts of the world and, in fact, gave considerable attention to this problem.<sup>1</sup> But differences of policy and outlook—as well as the purely practical difficulties—often stood in the way of affiliation. If the organisations in Europe gave the work of the international labour movement a decidedly European emphasis, it must also be remembered that overseas organisations which might have taken part in that work were slow to realise the importance of linking up with the international organisations and widening both their outlook and their activities.

Labour and Socialist parties overseas which might have affiliated to the L.S.I. are not very numerous. The most eligible parties are to be found in the British Dominions, and particularly in Australia and New Zealand. Those in the United States, Argentina, Uruguay and Palestine were already affiliated before 1939. Other parties existed, as in Latin America, India, China

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter III, p. 84, and Chapter IV, p. 133.

and Japan, but some of them were little known in Europe and others were regarded as not yet ripe for affiliation.<sup>1</sup> In the case of the I.F.T.U. the trade union centres in Canada, New Zealand and South Africa are affiliated, and also those of Argentina, China, India, Mexico and Palestine. The American Federation of Labour is affiliated but not the C.I.O., which, like the A.F. of L., has millions of members. There are, however, other national centres eligible for affiliation. The biggest scope for the affiliation of existing organisations is offered to the International Trade Secretariats. These are not obliged to accept only one organisation from each country, and the number of trade unions overseas which might link up with these bodies is considerable.

In many of the overseas countries the great problem is to develop new organisations rather than to secure the affiliation of those already in existence. The trade union movements of India and the Far East, for example, are only in their beginnings, and there is room for considerable development amongst the trade unions of Latin America. In some of these countries Socialist parties have been formed; in others it is a question whether such parties may be expected to grow up on the European model or whether the industrial and agricultural workers will evolve organisations of a different type which would nevertheless be able to co-operate with those already represented in the international labour movement. The colonial territories, too, provide a field for the growth of trade unions and political parties. In the United States, to take another example, there is a powerful trade union movement, but the Socialist Party has declined considerably in membership and influence.

Even if all the eligible parties and unions outside Europe were brought into the international labour movement, and even if labour movements could be developed in every country of the world, the practical difficulties of securing organised and continuous co-operation between the organisations of different continents would still remain. The problem of distance constitutes in itself a serious obstacle. With improved communications and increased facilities for travel by air the difficulty of maintaining contact will be appreciably lessened, but if the headquarters of the international labour movement remain in Europe, and if international meetings and conferences continue to be held, as a rule, in Europe, the overseas organisations will be at a disadvantage. In such circumstances their representatives would have the greatest distances to travel and the heaviest expenses to meet.

With a view to easing the financial burden of affiliated parties

<sup>1</sup> *Fourth Congress of the L.S.I., Vienna, 1931, Part V.*

in overseas countries the L.S.I. made a special concession by remitting their affiliation fees as a contribution towards the expenses of representation at international congresses.<sup>1</sup> Other concessions might also be considered, though not all the overseas organisations would need to take advantage of them. A greater number of meetings and conferences might be held outside Europe—which would not only lessen the financial strain for the overseas organisations but widen the experience of the European representatives. The establishment of overseas offices might also be considered. A decision to set up a Latin American secretariat was taken, for example, by the last pre-war Congress of the I.T.F. in 1938. This decision could not be implemented before the war broke out, but during the war the I.T.F. opened an office in New York.

If the international organisations are to become world-wide they will probably have to allow for a certain measure of decentralisation. Provision may have to be made, for example, for regional conferences as well as for overseas secretariats.<sup>2</sup>

One of the most important fields for new affiliations to the international labour movement is provided by the British Dominions. Though three of the national centres are already affiliated to the I.F.T.U. there are many individual trade unions which are still outside the International Trade Secretariats. And none of the labour parties in the Dominions is affiliated to the L.S.I. Yet there is no insuperable reason why these bodies should not be playing an important part in the international organisations. There are, of course, differences of policy and national interest, but after the experience of this war these differences should not be allowed to keep the organisations of the Dominions apart from those in Europe. The nations of the British Commonwealth cannot constitute a world of their own; the Dominions, like Britain herself, must think of the world as a whole.

If the Commonwealth is to carry its share of the burdens of world affairs the labour movements of the Dominions must be brought into closer touch with each other and with the labour movements of Great Britain and the Continent of Europe. To enable her to fulfil the obligations imposed upon her by her nearness to the European mainland Great Britain needs the understanding and support of the Governments and peoples of the Dominions. Much can be done to create that sympathy by the development of a closer relationship within the labour movement itself—bringing the labour parties and trade unions of the

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter III, p. 85.

<sup>2</sup> See below, p. 218.

Dominions into closer contact with the problems of Europe and giving the European organisations a more direct interest in the problems of countries overseas.

Steps have been taken from time to time to bring the organisations of Great Britain and the Dominions more closely together. On three occasions a British Commonwealth Labour Conference has been held for the purpose of consultation and exchange of information. There were no resolutions which would bind the constituent bodies to the pursuit of a given policy and no attempt was made to set up a new organisation alongside the I.F.T.U. and the L.S.I. Attendance was open to both labour parties and trade unions from Great Britain, the Dominions, India and the Colonies. Each country represented had one vote. Fraternal delegates were present from the L.S.I. and the I.F.T.U.

The conferences were held in London in 1925, 1928 and 1930. Great Britain, Canada, India, Ireland, Palestine and South Africa were represented at each of the conferences. Australia and British Guiana were represented in 1925 and 1930, Trinidad in 1928 and 1930, Ceylon in 1928, and New Zealand in 1930. Among the subjects discussed were inter-commonwealth relations; social and industrial problems of Great Britain and the Dominions; migration; racial problems; international labour legislation; and problems arising in specific countries and colonies.<sup>1</sup> No further conference was held, however, till April 1943, when representatives from the trade unions in Canada and South Africa met members of the General Council of the T.U.C. in London to discuss problems connected with the war effort.<sup>2</sup> A representative from New Zealand lost his life by enemy action while on his way to London.

A Dominions Labour Conference, in which the trade unions did not participate, was held in London from September 12th to 27th, 1944. The Conference was attended by representatives of the British Labour Party, the Labour Parties of Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, and the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation of Canada. Reports on conditions in the various Dominions were presented and consideration was given to a wide range of problems relating to the war, economic expansion, political developments and provision for social welfare. A state-

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the First British Commonwealth Labour Conference, held at the House of Commons, London, S.W.1., July 27 to August 1, 1925.* Published by the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party. *Report of Second British Commonwealth Labour Conference, held at the House of Commons, London, S.W.1., July 2 to July 6, 1928,* issued by the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party.

<sup>2</sup> *Report of the 75th Annual Trades Union Congress, Southport, 1943,* p. 95.

ment issued at the close of the Conference contained a number of recommendations to the constituent parties on the need for the defeat of Japan, the treatment of enemy countries, the proposed new general international organisation, Indian self-government, dependent peoples, the rôle of the Commonwealth and its Labour parties, the revival of the Socialist International and the responsibility of the Commonwealth Labour parties in world affairs. On the subject of the International the statement said, 'The Conference looks forward to the revival, as rapidly as possible, after victory, of a Socialist International in which it recommends that both the British Labour Party and the Dominion Labour Parties shall seek to play their full part. It welcomes the creation of a preparatory committee for this purpose.'<sup>1</sup> This was the first joint expression of a desire on the part of the Dominion parties to be associated with an international Socialist organisation.

America presents problems of a special kind. On the trade union side there is unfortunately no single national centre. Both the A.F. of L. and the C.I.O. are powerful organisations, with a membership running into millions. There are also unions which are attached to neither of these organisations. The rules of the I.F.T.U. provide that only one national centre can be affiliated to that body from each country. In its anxiety to establish more direct contact with the American trade union movement the I.F.T.U. accepted the affiliation of the A.F. of L. only, though its policy in such cases had usually been to defer applications for affiliation until the organisations in the country concerned had united to form a single national centre. By admitting the A.F. of L., the I.F.T.U. gained the adherence of unions representing some millions of organised workers but was still without any organic relationship with the unions in the C.I.O., whose membership has since increased considerably.<sup>2</sup>

If the I.F.T.U. is to have the co-operation of the American trade union movement as a whole it will be necessary either for the A.F. of L. and the C.I.O. to form a united organisation or for the C.I.O. to be affiliated alongside the A.F. of L. Unity, however, will be difficult to achieve.<sup>3</sup> The C.I.O. claims that its membership is at least as great as that of the A.F. of L. and expects to be treated as its equal. On the other hand, the A.F. of L. regards the C.I.O. as a breakaway organisation and deprecates the attempts of organisations in other countries to

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 216.

<sup>2</sup> The membership on which the A.F. of L. is affiliated to the I.F.T.U. is 5,900,000 (*International Federation of Trade Unions. Annual Report on Activities. May 1943*).

<sup>3</sup> *Report of the 75th Annual Trades Union Congress, Southport, 1943, p. 81.*

enter into relations with the C.I.O. Partly as a result of the encouragement given to trade unionism by the establishment of the National Labour Relations Board, and partly as a result of war-time conditions, the American trade union movement has been rapidly expanding. Accordingly a very high proportion of the members and officials of the American unions are comparatively new to trade unionism. While the organisations are increasing their membership and extending their influence they are unlikely to be in the mood for amalgamation. The creation of a single national centre would seem to be possible only if one of the two great organisations is absorbed by the other or if both decide in the light of experience that they have more to gain by joining forces than by continuing as separate and competing bodies.<sup>1</sup>

The alternative of accepting the C.I.O. into affiliation as well as the A.F. of L. is no less embarrassing. Both organisations would have to agree to this step and difficult decisions would have to be taken with regard to their representation. The affiliation of two organisations from the United States might not be an unmixed blessing. It would always be possible for their differences of outlook and policy to find expression at international meetings—a danger that the rule of 'one country, one organisation' was designed to avoid. It might, of course, be argued that in a huge country like the United States there is room for more than one national centre, with a clear division of functions and agreed machinery for co-ordination. But that is not the situation at the moment.<sup>2</sup>

This problem of the relations between the A.F. of L. and the C.I.O. does not affect the I.F.T.U. alone; it is also of concern to a number of the International Trade Secretariats. In several industries there are unions in both the A.F. of L. and the C.I.O. which are eligible for affiliation to the Trade Secretariat concerned. Some of the Trade Secretariats would no doubt be willing to accept the affiliation of unions belonging to either body.

On the political side there is no Labour or Socialist Party in the United States that can claim to be reasonably representative. The Socialist Party of the United States was founded in 1901 and down to the last war it made fair progress under the leader-

<sup>1</sup> For a short account of the trade union movement in the United States see Ernest Davies, *American Labour—the Story of the American Trade Union Movement*, Allen & Unwin, London, 1943.

<sup>2</sup> See also the suggestion made by Bryn Roberts that 'Although it is unlikely that organised unity can be achieved between them (their policies appear too divergent to expect this), a federated arrangement on the basis of an equal partnership seems to be not impracticable.' Bryn Roberts: *American Labour Split and Allied Unity*. Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1943, p. 170.



ship of Eugene V. Debs. In 1912 its membership was 118,000 and Debs polled 897,000 votes in the Presidential election of that year. During the war of 1914-1918 its membership fell away somewhat, but in 1919 it was back again to over 100,000, and in the Presidential election of 1920 Debs secured a vote of nearly one million. After that, however, the Party felt to an increasing extent the effects of the anti-Socialist policy of the public authorities and of the disruptive activities of the Communists. The Party did not run a candidate for President in 1924, but in 1928 its candidate, Norman Thomas, polled only 267,000 votes out of a total of over 36,000,000. At that time the Party's membership was down to 15,000. By the time of the last pre-war Congress of the L.S.I. in 1931 it had dropped to 12,000.<sup>1</sup>

In the absence of a strong American Socialist Party how can the political organisations of the working class in other countries co-operate through their international bodies with politically organised workers in the United States? If a closer understanding is to be developed between the United States and the peoples of Europe there will need to be greater co-operation between the workers' organisations on both sides of the Atlantic—on political as well as trade union problems. It should be possible, for example, for a body such as the British Labour Party to consult with its 'opposite number' in the United States. But there is no party of American Labour comparable to the Labour Party in standing and responsibility.

How, then, is co-operation with political representatives of the American workers to be organised? Must the international labour movement wait until a powerful American Labour or Socialist Party has been developed? Will some other body emerge to express the political needs and aspirations of American labour? Or will the discussion of international political problems be carried on with the American trade unions? It is possible that the political side of the American labour movement will be developed through the trade unions as in England and that a powerful Labour or Socialist party may be built up with trade union support. But it has to be remembered, on the other hand, that the American political system does not favour the growth of new parties. In order to secure popular support a party must be able to put up strong candidates in the Presidential elections—an opportunity which occurs only once in four years. The Socialist Party of the United States was never able to offer any serious challenge to the candidates put up by the Republicans

<sup>1</sup> *Second Congress of the L.S.I., Marseilles, 1925, p. 110. Third Congress of the L.S.I., Brussels, 1928, Section IV, p. 148. Fourth Congress of the L.S.I., Vienna, 1931, p. 372.*

and Democrats, and American labour has not yet evolved any other organisation of its own capable of representing it effectively in the political field.

Special problems also arise in the colonial territories. In many of the colonies a certain amount of progress has been made in the development of trade unions, and in the British colonies this problem is now being given considerable attention. Labour Departments have been set up in British colonial territories, labour officers—some of them from the British trade union movement—have been appointed, and legislation governing the position of colonial trade unions has been passed.<sup>1</sup> The British trade unions have been assisting in this development. They have pressed the case for the colonial trade unions in parliament and they are represented on the new Colonial Labour Advisory Committee set up by the Colonial Office. The T.U.C. have also taken the lead in providing trade union officials from the colonies with opportunities to take correspondence courses in trade unionism at Ruskin College, Oxford.<sup>2</sup>

All this, however, is still only a beginning. Still more attention will need to be given to the development of colonial trade unionism, both by the Governments of countries with overseas possessions and by the trade unions themselves. This will be particularly urgent in the case of metropolitan countries which have been occupied by the Germans during the war and of the colonial territories overrun by the Japanese.

With the development of self-government in the colonies new opportunities will also be provided for the growth of political organisation. Experience has already shown that politically conscious leaders of native workers are anxious to be in contact with the labour movement in the mother country. In the British colonies, for instance, there has been a tendency for them to look to the Labour Party and the T.U.C. for guidance and support. It is natural that they should wish to draw upon the experience of British labour in the handling of social questions and labour problems, especially as British colonial legislation and administration are inspired from London. As the native populations acquire a greater measure of responsibility for the government of their territories it is clear that parties or groups will be needed to express the political aspirations of the native workers. It will be the task of the labour movements in the home countries to guide and assist these organisations during their period of growth.

<sup>1</sup> *Labour Supervision in the Colonial Empire 1937-43*, Colonial Office. Colonial No. 185.

<sup>2</sup> *The T.U.C. in War-Time*, June 1943, p. 20.

If the international organisations of the labour movement are to play an effective part in the solution of colonial problems they will, of course, need to be in contact with the trade unions and political bodies representing the colonial workers. The task of fostering such movements in the special conditions obtaining in colonial territories is therefore not the least of their problems of organisation.

#### 4. RELATIONS WITH MOSCOW

What are to be the relations between the organisations of the Russian workers and those of the workers in other countries? All attempts made before the war to establish an organic connection between the L.S.I., the I.F.T.U., and the Russian organisations ended in failure.<sup>1</sup> But if the Soviet Union is to continue its co-operation with the other nations of the world it is obvious that the organised workers of the Soviet Union and those of other countries will need to be in close and friendly contact.

Unfortunately, two issues have been bound up together—that of the relations with the workers of the Soviet Union itself and that of the attitude to be adopted towards the Communist organisations in other countries. The Communist International and the Red International of Labour Unions did not speak only for the workers in the territories of the Soviet Union; they also represented the Communist parties and trade unions in other parts of the world. It was difficult for bodies such as the L.S.I. and the I.F.T.U. to reach an understanding with the Russian organisations themselves. After the collapse of the Anglo-Russian Joint Advisory Council in the nineteen-twenties<sup>2</sup> and the failure of the efforts to find a place for Russian unions in the International Trade Secretariats,<sup>3</sup> the discussions were carried on with the Comintern and the R.I.L.U. rather than with the Russian Communist Party or the All-Russian Council of Trade Unions. The L.S.I., indeed, was unable to enter into negotiations even with the Russian headquarters of the Comintern; its representatives only succeeded in meeting representatives of the Comintern from western Europe. Delegates from the I.F.T.U., on the other hand, were able to visit Moscow, but not until 1937.

Obviously the question of unity will have to be faced by the

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter III, p. 85, and Chapter IV, p. 139.

<sup>2</sup> *Report of the 56th Annual Trades Union Congress, Hull, 1924*, pp. 246, 311, 395. *Report of the 57th Annual Trades Union Congress, Scarborough, 1925*, p. 300. *Report of the 58th Annual Trades Union Congress, Bournemouth, 1926*, pp. 245, 437.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter IV, p. 157.

labour movement both internationally and in the various countries. The international problem is that of co-operation with the organisations in Russia. Nationally, the question is one of healing the breach between the Communists and the main body of the labour movement in each country. The two questions are separate, though the solution to both could be found in Moscow. The Communist Party in the Soviet Union and the Soviet trade unions can decide for themselves whether they will co-operate with the Social-Democratic parties or trade unions of other countries, and in most countries their co-operation would be welcomed. The Communist organisations outside the Soviet Union still take their inspiration from Moscow in spite of the disappearance of the Comintern and the R.I.L.U.

In 1941 the British T.U.C. entered into membership of a new Anglo-Russian Trade Union Council<sup>1</sup> and in the following year the Labour Party began to discuss the possibility of sending a delegation to Moscow.<sup>2</sup> In both cases there is an obvious desire for friendship with the people of Russia and for co-operation with the organisations representing the Russian workers. The same desire is present among the trade unions and Social-Democratic organisations of other countries. But there is a genuine difficulty in the way of friendly co-operation because the aims, the methods and the form of organisation adopted by the Russians and by their Communist followers in other countries are so different from those of the Social-Democrats and the 'free' trade unions. This difference in aims, methods and form of organisation was one of the principal reasons for the rejection of the Communist Party's application for affiliation to the Labour Party in 1943.<sup>3</sup> But it is also an obstacle to successful collaboration between the Communist Party and trade unions of Russia and the Labour and Socialist Parties and trade unions of other countries.

It is not to be expected that the organisations of the Labour and Socialist movement will abandon their faith in democracy and completely change their aims and objects, their methods and procedure, or their form and structure. Nor is there at present any sign of a fundamental change in the organisation, objects and methods of the party and the trade unions in the Soviet Union.

A further difficulty arises from the fact that the Communist organisations have been led by the Communist Party in Russia

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the 73rd Annual Trades Union Congress, Edinburgh, 1941*, p. 243.

<sup>2</sup> *Report of the 41st Annual Conference of the Labour Party, London, 1942*, p. 164. *Report of the 42nd Annual Conference of the Labour Party, London, 1943*, pp. 42, 149.

<sup>3</sup> *Report of the 42nd Annual Conference of the Labour Party, London, 1943*, p. 159.

whereas the Labour and Socialist parties and the 'free' trade unions insist upon autonomy. The inclusion of the Russian Communists in the same political International as the Labour and Socialist parties presupposes therefore that a compromise is found between the principle of autonomy and that of leadership from Moscow. The same applies to a single trade union International including the 'free' trade unions and those in Russia. It does not follow from all this that international co-operation between the organisations based on Russia and those of other countries is impossible. But it should be clear that a close organic relationship can only be satisfactory if there is genuine goodwill on both sides and if the differences inherent in the two forms of organisation are frankly recognised.

#### 5. ORGANISATION AFTER THE WAR

All these problems of organisation will need to be re-examined when opportunities for increased international activity arise after the war. But the great problem, on both the political and the industrial sides, will be whether the existing international organisations are to go forward or whether new Internationals should be formed.

A nucleus of organisation already exists. Some of the international bodies might simply continue in their present form, bringing back into their ranks the organisations from the countries of the Continent as they are liberated. Others might re-constitute themselves on the old lines as soon as there is a sufficient basis of organisation in the countries with which they are principally concerned. On the other hand, it is strongly held in many quarters that a fresh start should be made, especially by the organisations in the L.S.I., and the I.F.T.U. In particular it is urged that the new Internationals should be formed in collaboration with the organisations in the Soviet Union.

On the political side the L.S.I. ceased to function after the collapse of France. Organised activity then became impossible. Only a few parties of any size were left in existence (e.g. in Great Britain, Sweden and Switzerland) and these could not have acted in the name of the International, even if they had been able to hold meetings. In this case, therefore, a new beginning will need to be made, but whether the L.S.I. will be reconstituted on the old basis or whether a completely different form will be chosen remains to be seen. The same applies to the International of Socialist Youth.

In September 1944 the National Executive Committee of the British Labour Party announced that it had agreed at the request

of the Inter-Allied Consultative Committee<sup>1</sup> 'to take the initiative in creating an International Labour and Socialist Preparatory Committee to facilitate the resumption of contacts and the exchange of information among the Labour and Socialist Parties, and to undertake the study of the problems associated with the organisation, principles and policy of the future international association of democratic Labour and Socialist Parties'. This was the first positive step towards the creation of a post-war organisation. It will be noted that the announcement referred to principles as well as to organisation and policy, that it spoke of a future international association rather than of a new International, and that it indicated that the parties to be included would be democratic. The announcement stated that the chairman of the Preparatory Committee would be Camille Huysmans (Belgium) and the secretary William Gillies (Great Britain). It was also agreed that 'in the first place' the members should represent the Labour and Socialist Parties in Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, Great Britain, Holland, Luxemburg, Norway, Palestine and Poland. No enemy or neutral countries were included in the first list.

On the industrial side it was possible to continue a certain amount of organised activity. The I.F.T.U. remained in being and the national centres still affiliated in 1943 had a combined membership of over 16,000,000. An Emergency International Trade Union Council was formed by the I.F.T.U. in 1942 containing representatives of the existing national centres and of national groups formed amongst workers from continental countries who had made their way to England, as well as representatives of several International Trade Secretariats.<sup>2</sup> Some of the International Trade Secretariats were likewise able to maintain a nucleus of organisation, even though their activities were necessarily restricted. The International Transportworkers' Federation, the Miners' International Federation, the British Section of the International Metal Workers' Federation and the International Federation of Textile Workers' Associations were amongst those which succeeded in retaining a measure of continuity.

Such organisations as the I.F.T.U. and these Trade Secretariats might find it possible, if they so desired, to continue their activities and to take back into affiliation the organisations which were forced to drop out owing to the war. Some of the other Trade Secretariats might be faced with the necessity of making

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter II, p. 46.

<sup>2</sup> *International Federation of Trade Unions. Annual Report on Activities, May 1943.* See also Chapter II, pp. 56 and 63.

a completely fresh start. On the other hand, the opportunity may be taken to form a new International representing both the national centres and the different trades. A proposal for the formation of a World Federation on this basis was submitted to the Emergency International Trade Union Council in April 1943.<sup>1</sup>

Briefly the suggestion was that the new World Federation should consist both of national centres and of international trade departments. There were to be two sets of delegates at the International Trade Union Congress drawn from the national centres and trade departments in approximately equal numbers. The international trade departments would be fully autonomous inside the World Federation and would hold international trade conferences on matters relating to their own trades or industries. In addition to the International Trade Union Congress there would be annual continental or regional conferences composed of delegates from the national centres and trade departments in the areas concerned. These conferences would appoint continental or regional boards and secretariats.

A discussion on the future international organisation of the trade union movement took place at the World Trade Union Conference held in London, on the invitation of the British T.U.C., in February 1945. The Conference was attended by delegates from organisations affiliated to the I.F.T.U. and the International Trade Secretariats, as well as from unaffiliated organisations such as the Russian trade unions and the American C.I.O. The A.F. of L., however, declined the invitation to be represented. As a result of the discussion a committee, containing representatives of the principal national organisations and also of the I.F.T.U. and the International Trade Secretariats, was appointed to work out the constitution of a new international organisation.<sup>2</sup>

Another of the problems confronting the international bodies is to decide which organisations should be admitted from the various countries. The question which arises is, should an effort be made to provide representation for as many countries as possible—even before the labour movement in those countries has been properly reconstituted—or should only really representative organisations be admitted into affiliation? It may not always be easy to decide which organisations will be eligible, since in some countries there may be a period of confusion. During the war of 1914-1918 the Labour and Socialist

<sup>1</sup> *International Federation of Trade Unions. Annual Report on Activities*, May 1943.

<sup>2</sup> *Report of the World Trade Union Conference, London, 1945*. Published by the T.U.C., London, 1945.

Parties and the trade unions on both sides of the line remained in existence, even though the contacts between them were broken. There were also a number of neutral countries in which activity could be maintained. But after the present war the task of recognising the eligible organisations and settling rival claims will be more difficult. In many countries of Europe the labour movement has been driven underground during the war, while in some of the others it had been condemned to a clandestine existence even earlier. It may therefore take some time before a united labour movement, on a nation-wide scale, can be built up in each of the countries concerned. Until that stage has been reached the international bodies will have the difficult task of deciding which organisations to encourage and support.

Some of the organisations which emerge in continental countries may be led by men who were unknown in international labour circles before the war. Or they may take on unfamiliar forms. On the other hand, it may not be possible to assume that every organisation which calls itself a Labour party or a free trade union is one in actual fact. Difficult questions of recognition are therefore bound to arise.

How long will it take, then, before the international organisations are fully reconstituted? After the last war the I.F.T.U. and most of the Trade Secretariats were firmly established before the question of international organisation was settled in the political field. As a result of their differing attitudes towards the war the political parties found themselves in two groups—those which constituted the Vienna Union and those which remained in the old Second International. The controversies between these two bodies were complicated by the problems arising out of the formation of the Third International—the Comintern—in Moscow. It was therefore not until 1923 that the Labour and Socialist parties were able to unite in establishing the Labour and Socialist International. The indications are that after the present war the trade unions may find it easier to set up their international organisations than the political parties. But in view of the way in which the labour movement has been broken up in the various countries there may be a long period of uncertainty before the international organisations can settle down on a secure basis.

Another question which is bound to arise is whether the international organisations of the labour movement should set out to be all-inclusive or not. Two possibilities are open—either to embrace all national bodies which desire to affiliate, subject to their accepting a broad general statement of aims and objects, or to confine the international organisations to parties



and trade unions which really agree on fundamentals.<sup>1</sup> The problem is whether it is more desirable to be as fully representative as possible—even at the risk of including widely divergent elements—or whether it is better to omit certain national organisations altogether in the hope of securing harmony of outlook. Hitherto the L.S.I., the I.F.T.U., the Socialist Youth International and the Trade Secretariats have been willing to accept into affiliation any *bona fide* organisations that were prepared to subscribe to their broad, general objects. If membership of the international bodies were to be confined to organisations in full agreement on fundamental questions of principle, the statement of aims and objects would have to be more precise and a stricter test of admission would be needed.

It can be argued that the international organisations would be more effective if their membership could be restricted to national sections which were in fundamental agreement—that they would find it easier both to reach decisions and to carry them out. But what would be the attitude of the parties or unions that were left outside? Some of them might combine to form other international organisations of their own. Others might simply carry on in isolation. There would be a danger that the workers of the various countries would be distracted by propaganda in favour of different international policies. Yet at the same time they would be urged to unite. A decision to form exclusive rather than universal international organisations would therefore only be justifiable if it were believed to be the best way to make a sound beginning. It could not be regarded as a permanent solution.

As an alternative to attempting to secure agreement on fundamental questions of principle it might be possible to envisage agreement on a clearly-defined policy or programme of action. The advantage of this would be that national organisations differing in their structure and general outlook might be brought into association for the pursuit of certain limited objectives. If they had a common interest in securing these aims they might be willing to overlook other differences, and combine on a programme of joint action. The emphasis would be on definite realisable objectives rather than upon principles and ideologies. Even to reach agreement on a programme of action, however, would not be easy. But if an acceptable programme could be adopted the effect would be to facilitate co-operation amongst national bodies which would otherwise be cut off from each other. This again, however, would have to be regarded as a beginning. Co-operation for limited purposes would not necessarily result in the early formation of firm international organisa-

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter III, p. 74, and Chapter IV, p. 117.

tions. The problem of developing close organic relationships would still remain to be solved.

One thing is vital. If the international organisations of the labour movement are to have any real significance they must be capable of action. This means that they must be able to take decisions. The problem therefore is to secure that the international organisations are composed and constructed with a view to decision and action. If the constituent elements are too diverse there will be little likelihood of their reaching agreed decisions or taking effective action unless they display the greatest toleration towards each other and reveal a genuine desire to work together for the common good.

A special problem will arise in connection with the organisations of the labour movement in Germany and other enemy countries. After the last war there were many difficulties to be overcome before the representatives of the German labour movement and those of the movement in some of the Allied countries were able to sit down together in conference. The position may be even more difficult after the present war. Opinions are divided regarding the attitude to be adopted towards the German people, and even in labour circles there are different points of view on the subject of co-operation with representatives of the German workers. It is pointed out that Hitler could not have carried out his war policy without the help of the German workers, who provided the bulk of the manpower for his armies and took part in the production drive in his war factories. What is not known, however, is how many of the German workers actively supported the war and the régime, how many simply accepted the situation and how many were driven into an unwilling support by sheer terrorism.

No one can deny that there was opposition to Hitler amongst the German workers not only before he came to power but throughout the period down to the outbreak of war, though for various reasons the number of active opponents must have fallen considerably. But during the war itself it became difficult, if not impossible, to obtain any reliable information as to the strength of this opposition. It was not known for certain to what extent the resistance had continued, whether the underground opposition was organised and co-ordinated, where were the centres of working-class resistance, or who were the workers' leaders. In Germany, therefore, the problem of recognition will be more difficult than in the occupied countries. It will not be a question of resuming contact with individuals and organisations who were already known but rather of establishing the *bona fides* of new leaders and deciding what attitude to adopt towards

organisations which may differ considerably from those which existed in Germany before 1933.<sup>1</sup>

Similar problems may be expected to arise when contacts are resumed with the workers of other enemy countries.

In all these cases special care will no doubt be taken by the international organisations of the labour movement in deciding which bodies to accept into affiliation and what conditions to impose. It may be taken for granted that labour movements will emerge in those countries again as soon as the dictatorships are overthrown. But after the years of repression these movements will need help from outside. It will be for the international bodies to consider what forms of assistance and co-operation are possible.

Before the organisations in enemy countries are able to play their full part in the international labour movement they may have to pass through a period of trial. Presumably the international bodies will wish to be sure that the new labour movements in the enemy countries have broken completely away from the influence of Nazism and Fascism. Such a clean break may not be easy to achieve. The workers in Germany, for example, might form entirely new organisations; or they might attempt to 'take over' from the German Labour Front. Many members of the new organisations would be former Nazis, and some would be Nazis still. In view of these possibilities it has been suggested that a period of supervision and re-education will be necessary before the labour movement in enemy countries can stand on its own feet.

It is, of course, possible that when the international bodies start afresh after the war they may admit these organisations from the beginning; but it is more likely that they may decide to wait until they can see more clearly.

## 6. FINANCE

If the work of the international labour movement is to be efficiently organised the national sections will have to provide funds on a much higher scale.<sup>2</sup> Increased activity and added responsibilities are bound to result in heavier expenditure. There should be more meetings and conferences and more exchanges of visits. Greater attention will need to be paid to the collection and dissemination of information. Larger and more competent staffs will be required.

<sup>1</sup> *The Next Germany*. Penguin Books, London, 1943.

<sup>2</sup> See Bjarne Braatoy: *Labour and War*. Allen & Unwin, London, 1934; p. 99.

A higher degree of organisation and efficiency will be necessary both for the international organisations themselves and for their national sections. The international bodies should be in a position to build up adequate libraries and records. They should be able to develop an information service based not only upon general sources but upon communications from their own national sections. On the other hand, the national sections themselves would need to give more attention to the provision of information for the international bodies and to the use of material which those bodies would supply. All this, of course, would involve additional expense.

Provision should also be made for the economic security of international secretaries and their staffs. If the best men and women are to be attracted to the work their pay and conditions of service should be on a level that would enable them and their families to live abroad without undue financial worry. There is also the problem of their standing in the labour movements of their home countries. Not all those who enter the international service desire to remain in it until they reach retiring age. But a person who spends some years in the service of the international labour movement runs the risk of damaging his prospects of advancement in the movement at home. This is a further reason for improving the opportunities provided by an international career. It would also be a help if national sections could undertake to safeguard the seniority and superannuation rights of those who enter the service of the international labour movement and to provide them with suitable openings on their return.

Again, the national sections will need to lift their international activities to a higher level. As already pointed out, they need to be organised for the proper fulfilment of their international obligations.<sup>1</sup> Some may require international secretaries, who should rank amongst their principal officers. International departments could be better equipped and international committees made more effective. And greater facilities could be provided for officers and members of committees to gain knowledge and experience by travel. These things, too, would all call for more expenditure.

Unfortunately it has been difficult in the past to secure funds for international work. Some organisations have found trouble in setting aside the amounts required for affiliation fees. In the discussions concerning the possibility of forming a new World Federation of Trade Unions, for example, some doubt was expressed as to whether the organisations concerned would be

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 170.

willing to pay a higher affiliation fee than before.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the problem of raising additional funds will have to be faced.

In future the number of international problems to be dealt with by the labour movement will tend to grow. Not only will the international organisations have to carry greater responsibilities but their sections in the various countries will find that to an increasing extent the solution of their own domestic problems will bring them face to face with international issues. One of the most serious problems of organisation before the international labour movement, therefore, is how to provide the additional income that will be required.

<sup>1</sup> *International Federation of Trade Unions. Annual Report on Activities, May 1943.*

## METHODS AND FUNCTIONS

IT has been assumed in the preceding chapters that international relations will occupy an increasingly important place in the work of the labour movement. The fact that working-class organisations have been seeking ways of achieving international co-operation for over three-quarters of a century has already been mentioned.<sup>1</sup> In spite of the disappointments and mistakes, in spite of the setbacks suffered in two world wars, that search will continue.

But the growth of international co-operation in the labour movement is not an isolated phenomenon. International understanding is also being promoted in other fields—by voluntary associations and movements and by the official action of Governments. Henceforward the number of organisations and agencies set up both by Governments and by voluntary effort is likely to increase. The international organisations of the labour movement must be seen against the general background. Although they differ in form and structure, in their objects and in their spheres of activity, they are all striving to promote peace, economic development, social progress and the advancement of culture. And these are at bottom the aims of international co-operation in general.

Obviously, then, the promotion of international co-operation by and in the labour movement is not a question of concern to the labour movement alone. It is necessary not only for the workers and their leaders but also for Governments, employers, and the people generally to have a clear conception of the purposes of the international organisations of the labour movement, of their functions and of their place in the general picture.

In earlier chapters an outline was given of the aims and objects of these international organisations and of the work which they have actually attempted to do. But it may be asked whether the methods which they pursued in the past are appropriate to the conditions of the present. Regard must also be paid not only to their actual but to their potential functions, not only to the conditions under which they formerly worked but also to the opportunities which may be open to them in the future.

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter I, p. 1.

## I. SCOPE AND LIMITS OF INTERNATIONAL ACTION

Before passing judgment upon the international organisations of the labour movement or attempting to assess their rôle in the future development of international co-operation, it is necessary to have some idea of the scope and limits of their activities, and to consider their methods of decision and action.

As already stated,<sup>1</sup> these international bodies are composed of organisations in the various countries which claim the right to a large measure of autonomy. The national organisations are not subordinate sections of the international bodies but have their own independent existence. Their connection with an international body does not mean that they receive instructions from a higher authority but simply that they have come together in a free association in order to deal with matters of common concern by agreement.

In arriving at their decisions, therefore, the international organisations must have regard to the desires of their national sections. The fact that they are unable to impose their will upon the national sections affects both the content of the decisions and the methods by which they are reached. Moreover, decisions of the international organisations are carried out in the various countries by the national sections themselves. The international organisations have no independent executive organs in the different countries; except in so far as action can be taken by the respective secretariats or international committees they must rely for their activity upon what the national sections are able and willing to do. Accordingly, the deliberations of these organisations resolve themselves into attempts to reach international agreement on policies which are acceptable to the sections in the different countries.

These factors may limit the capacity of the organisations in the labour movement to take effective action. But they apply, of course, to other international organisations as well. They influence the work not only of voluntary organisations but also of official bodies. In any consideration of the international record of the labour movement these factors should be borne in mind. When it is asked whether the international organisations could not have been more active or more effective, the answer must be sought in the different countries as well as in the proceedings of the international bodies themselves.

Regard must also be paid to the economic and political conditions under which the organisations have to do their work. The limits and possibilities of international action in the labour

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter V, pp. 190-196.

movement vary from time to time according to circumstances. It is not merely a question of whether the organisations themselves can agree as to what they want to do. Policies which would be quite feasible at one moment might be useless or even dangerous at another. There was, for example, a period during which the international organisations of the labour movement were able to advocate all-round disarmament; but the States did not disarm and with the growth of dictatorship and militarism the emphasis had to be shifted to collective resistance to aggression. This did not mean that disarmament was wrong in itself but simply that in the new circumstances it was for the time being impracticable.

Similarly in the economic sphere. The international organisations of the labour movement had plans for the reorganisation of the economic system, the prevention of unemployment, and so on. But the chances of securing acceptance for their ideas depended not only upon the energy with which they were advocated but also upon the conditions applying in the world at a given time. The possibilities varied at different periods. There was a vast difference, for example, between the policies that could be put forward during the years of post-war boom and recovery after 1918 and those that were appropriate to, say, the time of economic crisis from 1929 onwards, or the period of national self-sufficiency which preceded the outbreak of war in 1939.

Nor must it be forgotten that the opportunities for effective action by the international organisations in the labour movement can be influenced by the attitude of Governments and peoples to the organisations themselves. For the greater part of the time these organisations have carried on their activities in the face of indifference and sometimes of open opposition. The public attitude towards their constituent bodies has varied from time to time and from country to country, but the international organisations as such have had relatively little backing outside the labour movement.

Public opinion generally has had only a vague idea of their policies, their activities and their position. They have been looked upon as merely oppositional bodies. They have not been regarded, nor have they regarded themselves, as organisations with a definite place and function in the general scheme of international co-operation.

But clearly, the scope and limits of their activities must depend in a large measure upon whether they have to carry on in isolation or whether they are considered as elements in a great movement of society towards peace and social progress. Not only must



the international organisations consider their own position, but public opinion must know whether they are to be merely tolerated, or actively opposed or openly welcomed and encouraged.

## 2. FORMS OF INTERNATIONAL ACTION

From the account of the work of the international organisations already given<sup>1</sup> it will be clear that one of their major concerns was the determination of policy—both for long-term purposes and to meet the needs of an immediate situation. The formulation of policy is, of course, the prelude to action. Without well-informed and clear-cut decisions it is useless to expect that action will be united and energetic. Both action and decision, however, need as their basis an exchange of accurate and up-to-date information.

### a. *Avoidance of Action*

Decisions are taken either by the committees of the international bodies or by a full conference or congress. They may consist of declarations of principle to guide the affiliated organisations in their activities. Or they may contain specific proposals for action. Sometimes, however, the discussions result in the avoidance of action,<sup>2</sup> and this, curiously enough, is one of the benefits which the organisations in the various countries derive from their international affiliations. It is easy to imagine what difficulties and embarrassments the trade unions and labour parties, for example, can create for each other by taking independent action on matters of mutual concern, or by advocating policies which might be desirable in one country but extremely harmful in another, or by expressing views about matters arising in other countries without regard to their repercussions. If there were no international organisations in the labour movement such difficulties would arise more frequently. The existence of international bodies does not eliminate them entirely but it does make it possible for them to be considerably reduced, provided that the organisations in the various countries take their international obligations seriously.

### b. *Exchange of Information*

An exchange of reliable information is one of the factors that help to reduce these dangers and to ensure that any action taken

<sup>1</sup> See Chapters III and IV.

<sup>2</sup> See also Chapter V, p. 195.

is based on a sound knowledge of the circumstances and possibilities. To collect and disseminate information is one of the chief functions of an international secretariat, but this can only be done effectively with the co-operation of the affiliated bodies. The secretariat, it is true, can obtain a certain amount of material by its own efforts; the remainder, however, must be supplied by the organisations in the various countries—both in response to requests from the international secretariat and on their own initiative. To be fully effective the international organisations need to be able to collect more information from their own sources.

It is to be doubted whether the organisations in the different countries have fully realised the importance of this. All the international organisations experience difficulty in keeping their records complete and up-to-date, even though the interests of each national section demand that its views and activities, its problems and circumstances should be fully understood by all the others. In a comment on this problem the secretariat of the International Federation of Building and Wood Workers has pointed out that 'Nothing . . . has so paralysing an effect on the effort to build up, even within the framework of our own limited circumstances, a well-functioning international working association, as constant worry and trouble in procuring the material which is, there is no getting away from it, indispensable for any worthwhile activity.'<sup>1</sup>

Among the methods adopted for gathering information is the perusal of newspapers, journals and bulletins issued by the affiliated organisations. These, of course, are published in many languages, which complicates the task of the international secretariat. Moreover, the staff of the secretariat must be equipped with a good deal of background knowledge if the articles and notes in these publications are to be properly understood. Information is also obtained from the affiliated organisations by means of special enquiries and questionnaires, from the periodical reports supplied for the use of international meetings and conferences, and from the verbal statements made by delegates. What is lacking is a more rapid and up-to-the-minute service of news. Many misunderstandings and difficulties would be avoided if the organisations did not have to rely so much for news of each other's activities and decisions upon newspaper and wireless reports. The solution of this problem, as of so many others, depends upon how far the national sections are able to go in providing funds and in undertaking heavier commitments in the interests of effective international co-operation.

<sup>1</sup> *The I.B.W.W. during the years 1934, 1935.* Amsterdam, June 1936.

There is also the question of disseminating the information that comes in. The international secretariats issue press reports, bulletins and similar publications, as well as reports on activities, conference proceedings and booklets or memoranda on special subjects. The I.F.T.U., for example, publishes a mimeographed bulletin and a monthly printed review called *The International Trade Union Movement*. Before the war it also issued a year-book and the usual printed reports. The L.S.I. used to produce *International Information*—a mimeographed press report with various supplements. Other publications included the Bulletin of the L.S.I., which was mainly devoted to the decisions of the Executive and other committees, a number of pamphlets and booklets and the periodical congress reports. Amongst the International Trade Secretariats the greatest amount of material was, and still is, produced by the International Transportworkers' Federation. In addition to its press reports the I.T.F. has for many years issued a bulletin called *Fascism*, which contains information on the conditions in countries governed by dictatorships and news of the struggle against Fascism throughout the world. There have also been the reports of congresses and conferences and numerous publications on special problems of transport.<sup>1</sup> All the material issued by these organisations is produced in three languages and sometimes more.

Information sent out by the international secretariats is of three main kinds: (a) items of general interest; (b) special or technical material; and (c) information supplied for particular purposes on request. General information about the activities and policies of the international organisations may be expected to interest not only the members of the affiliated organisations but a wider public. On the other hand, items of technical information relating to, say, the conditions in a given industry, or articles and reports on special subjects, are intended primarily for the affiliated organisations. Items of general interest and those dealing with technical and special subjects are to be found side by side in the same publications—such as bulletins and press reports. It would, however, be an advantage in many cases if a clearer distinction could be drawn between the material intended for the information of the organisations themselves and the notes, reports or articles suitable for general propaganda and publicity.<sup>2</sup>

Bulletins, press reports and similar publications are sent both to the affiliated organisations and their journals, and to the general press. The newspapers, however, are primarily con-

<sup>1</sup> See also Chapter IV, p. 149.

<sup>2</sup> See below, p. 240.

cerned with items of general interest, and even these are only used when they really make news. Moreover, bulletins and press reports sent through the post from country to country, and even from continent to continent, cannot be expected to compete with news stories transmitted by cable or wireless. It might therefore be better from the point of view of the wider public if items of general information were more often treated as news to be handled by the most rapid available means, leaving the bulletins and periodicals to carry the less urgent material and the information specifically intended for the affiliated organisations.

Much greater use could be made of the facilities for providing information on request. Trade union national centres, individual unions, labour and socialist parties and the other organisations of the labour movement are constantly in need of reliable information about other countries for their guidance in formulating policy, for use in propaganda, and so on. It should be customary for them to obtain much more of this material from the international secretariats as and when it is required.

To meet their particular requirements at a given time it should be possible for socialist parties to obtain, say, specially prepared information on political developments and problems, while trade unions should be able to obtain economic information and particulars of conditions in given industries.<sup>1</sup> The work of these organisations would benefit considerably if they could be supplied with more of this information for their special needs. Two conditions are, however, necessary: first that the affiliated organisations should turn to the international secretariats more frequently for help of this kind and, secondly, that the international secretariats should actually have the information at hand or be able to obtain it within a reasonable period. This would mean expanding the staffs of the secretariats to enable the necessary research work to be done and providing increased funds in order that better library facilities might be developed.<sup>2</sup>

Lastly, it is of the utmost importance that the national sections should follow the information which they receive from the international secretariats and see that it is made available to their members—and, if necessary, to a wider public also. This they can only do if they are adequately organised for the fulfilment of their international obligations. The duty of digesting and passing on international information—as well as of supplying material to the international secretariat—rests in the first place

<sup>1</sup> For particulars of information supplied by the I.T.F. for the use of affiliated unions see Chapter IV, p. 149.

<sup>2</sup> See also Chapter IV for proposals for amalgamating some of the International Trade Secretariats with a view to increased efficiency.

upon the officers and committees appointed by the trade union national centres, labour parties and other national organisations to take charge of international activities.<sup>1</sup> Similarly it is for these officers and committees to see that representatives who attend international meetings and conferences are properly briefed. But to follow this work continuously demands the expenditure of both time and money. The problem, therefore, is to provide more funds and to find more people who will give the necessary time and thought to international activities.

### *c. Nature of International Action*

What kind of action may be expected to follow from international decisions? As already explained above<sup>2</sup> the activities of an international organisation are only carried on to a limited extent by the secretariat or committees of the organisation itself; for the most part the necessary action has to be taken by the affiliated organisations. In the case of a policy resolution or a pronouncement on a great question of principle the decision is usually important as a guide to the affiliated organisations in their own activities. The extent to which their work is influenced by the international decisions which they themselves help to shape is one measure of the effectiveness of international co-operation. This influence, however, is extremely difficult to assess. It would be impossible to say, for example, how much the policy and activities of the British Labour Party or Trades Union Congress have been affected by the discussions and decisions of the international bodies with which they are associated. But it is at least clear that the influence both on their attitude towards domestic problems and on their handling of international questions has been definite and far-reaching. By the decisions which they take after international deliberations the organisations in the various countries exert a profound influence on each other. This is one of the most significant ways in which international co-operation becomes effective.

If the decision contains definite suggestions for action it is usually the case that the main burden falls upon the affiliated organisations. The responsibility for initiating action and for co-ordinating the efforts of the national sections may rest upon the international secretariat or on one of the international committees, but there is relatively little that these organisations can do independently. The secretariat, for example, may be instructed to circulate proposals and resolutions to the press, or

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter V, p. 170.

<sup>2</sup> See also Chapter V, p. 199.

to prepare and issue literature, or to send out appeals for funds. An international committee may be asked to study a problem and prepare a report, or to make a visit of investigation, or to form a delegation to a Government or other body with a view to urging the point of view of the international organisation concerned. But none of these things counts for so much as the cumulative effect of the action which can be taken by the affiliated organisations in their own countries.

Examples of the kind of action that can be taken are to be found in the programme of action *In Favour of Disarmament* which was adopted by the L.S.I. and the I.F.T.U. in 1931.<sup>1</sup> At that time the two Internationals were laying great stress upon the need for disarmament. The Disarmament Conference was due to be held, after long delays, in Geneva, and it was felt that the whole weight of the international labour movement should be thrown into the campaign for disarmament and that every possible means of action should be employed. The steps agreed upon in the joint programme involved action both by the international secretariats and by the affiliated organisations.

It was decided, for example, that the Second Workers' Olympiad, to be held in Vienna in July 1931, should be used as an opportunity to demonstrate for disarmament and that the proceedings in the disarmament debate at the ensuing International Socialist Congress should likewise be turned into a disarmament demonstration. The Olympiad was being organised by the Workers' Sport International, with the co-operation of the L.S.I. and the I.F.T.U., while the Congress was being held by the L.S.I. Here, then, were two international demonstrations.

A further decision was that the L.S.I. and the I.F.T.U. should hold a disarmament conference of their own in the spring of 1932 to take fresh decisions in the light of the discussions at the Geneva Conference. The joint conference of the two Internationals, like the Olympiad and the Congress, was to be an international gathering, but the success of all three, of course, depended upon the support of the organisations in the different countries.

The central point of the programme was an international petition campaign in favour of disarmament. The campaign was to be initiated and sponsored by the two Internationals but it was pointed out that 'a necessary condition' for its success was 'the most active co-operation of the affiliated parties and trade union organisations in all countries'. Copies of the petitions

<sup>1</sup> *Fourth Congress of the L.S.I., Vienna, 1931*, p. 892. See also Chapter III, p. 103.

collected in each country were to be handed to the respective Governments by joint deputations from the parties and trade union national centres, while further copies forwarded from all the countries concerned were to be presented to the President of the Disarmament Conference by a joint deputation from the L.S.I. and the I.F.T.U.

Meetings and demonstrations in the various countries were also suggested. It was proposed that international demonstrations near the frontiers should be organised 'by parties and trade unions in countries adjacent to one another'. And large public meetings were to be held in the most important European cities with speakers from various countries. The speakers were to be 'provided where possible by the parties themselves', though the secretariats of the L.S.I. and the I.F.T.U. would attempt to remove difficulties.

Then there was to be a disarmament campaign carried out through the press and by means of pamphlets and posters. For this purpose special propaganda literature was to be published by the secretariats of the two Internationals but it was emphasised that 'the whole campaign is naturally dependent to a considerable extent upon the co-operation of the Socialist and trade union Press'.

It was also agreed that action should be taken in the various parliaments. The suggestion was that the disarmament proposals of the L.S.I. and the I.F.T.U. should be put forward in the parliaments of the different countries by the Socialist parliamentary groups. Here again was a step to be taken by the affiliated organisations.

Two other proposals necessitated direct action by the international secretariats. One was that the secretariats of the L.S.I. and the I.F.T.U. should collect reports on the progress of the campaign in the different countries and give them publicity. The other was that the two Internationals should have their own observer at the Disarmament Conference in Geneva to supply first-hand reports on the progress of the deliberations. In the light of this information the committees of the two Internationals would decide from time to time what further action to recommend.

Such were the activities proposed—and subsequently carried out—under the joint programme. The example is significant because it summarises the possibilities of action that seemed to be open to the international labour movement—including such bodies as the International Trade Secretariats, the Workers' Sport International and the Socialist Youth International, as well as the L.S.I. and the I.F.T.U.—on one of the most impor-

tant issues of the time. Moreover, in 1931 the international labour movement had not yet been weakened by the break-up of the great organisations in Germany, Austria and other countries, and the conditions for international action were more favourable than at any subsequent period.

International action, then, depends in a large measure upon what can be done in the different countries by the organisations in those countries. There is a tendency to think of international action as being taken by a body standing apart from, or even above the various national organisations, whereas it consists in the main of the combined or parallel activities of those organisations, with an international secretariat or committee to initiate, to co-ordinate and to support. If this were more clearly understood there would be fewer illusions about the possibilities of international action and about the responsibilities for failures.

It is a mistake, for example, to think of the L.S.I. or the I.F.T.U. as a separate international entity and to overlook the parties and trade union national centres of which those organisations are composed. It is likewise wrong to speak of the leadership of the international organisations without taking into account that most of the leaders are at the same time prominent figures in the labour movements of their own countries and answerable to those movements for their actions. The same applies to bodies such as the League of Nations and the International Labour Organisation, whose members consist of national States and whose leading personalities—apart from the permanent secretariats—are responsible to their respective Governments or national organisations.<sup>1</sup>

It should be clear, for instance, that the attempt to promote disarmament through the League of Nations could only have succeeded if the Governments of the separate States had been willing to disarm. The League itself, acting through the Assembly, the Council or the Secretariat, could not disarm a country in the absence of action by the Governments. Nor could the League as such impose sanctions. It could recommend the imposition of sanctions but the necessary action had to be taken in the different countries. Again, the I.L.O. as an organisation has no power to make new laws and regulations in a country. It can prepare Draft Conventions or Recommendations, but it

<sup>1</sup> 'The League is not an institution with an existence separate from the Governments; it is organically nothing but the totality of States which are its members. . . . The League is not a super-State and the Secretariat cannot act as a super-State service. It is a body of officials responsible equally to all the Governments in the League. . . . It is not an independent organ of the League but the servant of the League and of the whole League.' *Ten Years of World Co-operation*. League of Nations, Geneva, 1930, pp. 401-402.



rests with the Governments of the countries concerned to put them into force.<sup>1</sup> So with the international organisations of the labour movement, which likewise depend for their effectiveness upon the co-operation of the organisations of which they are composed.

One of the disadvantages from which the international work of the labour movement has suffered has been the tendency to overrate the power of 'the International'.<sup>2</sup> Proposals for action should be related to the real strength of the international organisations and to the possibilities for giving effect to them in the different countries. International decisions have sometimes seemed to demand or to promise more than could in fact be performed. In such cases the result has been to give the impression that the organisations are strong only on paper.

There have been occasions also when national sections have been embarrassed by international decisions which they were either unable or unwilling to apply in their own countries. This, however, can hardly be avoided if international decisions are taken at all. In some quarters it is suggested that the international organisations should not pass resolutions but should be merely consultative and informative bodies. This is a question to be settled by the international organisations themselves when the time comes. But if resolutions and declarations are ruled out altogether, it is difficult to see how any concerted international action could be achieved. The national sections would decide—as at present—what action to take in their own countries, but they would have no international policy or principles to guide them.

#### d. *Parallel or Combined Action*

Action by these affiliated organisations, as already indicated, may be parallel or combined. It is not a case of independent action organised and directed from a single centre but of activities carried on side by side in different countries—sometimes running

<sup>1</sup> 'The essential difference between Albert Thomas' vision of the International Labour Organisation and that of others was that whereas their attention was concentrated on the Office, the Governing Body and the Conference, his view embraced the periphery as well as the centre. Only in the Member States could concrete results be achieved. The organs at Geneva might plan for those results, supply information which would facilitate them, might desire and stimulate them, but no more. It lay with other institutions, scattered throughout fifty odd countries, to follow or to ignore the lead that Geneva might give.'

'The Organisation in its full and "living" sense (to use his favourite expression), embraced those distant institutions just as much as its central machinery.'

E. J. Phelan: *Yes and Albert Thomas*, The Cresset Press, London, 1936, p. 143.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter V, p. 193.

parallel and sometimes co-ordinated into a more or less combined movement.

No hard and fast line can be drawn between the two. Examples of parallel action are provided by the publicity obtained for international discussions and decisions through the press and by the propaganda carried on by means of meetings and conferences. Such activities have to be conducted by the organisations in their respective countries according to the circumstances and possibilities. In some countries the labour and trade union papers may be almost the only vehicle for press publicity; in others great interest is displayed by sections of the non-labour press. The possibility of organising successful meetings and conferences also varies from country to country. It is left to the national organisations to decide whether it is opportune to hold meetings for a given purpose and, if so, what kind of meetings should be arranged.

Similarly, in the case of parliamentary and trade union action. An international conference or meeting may decide that certain questions ought to be raised in the different parliaments or that the various trade unions should support certain measures by strike action, or through collective bargaining or by pressing for legislation. But the action taken in the various parliaments will vary from country to country according to the strength of the parliamentary groups, the requirements of parliamentary procedure, the political situation in the country itself, and so on; and the line taken by the trade unions will likewise depend upon their view of the circumstances and possibilities in their respective national surroundings. What actually happens, therefore, is that the national organisations take their own action in the light of their international decisions and that similar aims and objects are being pursued in different countries at the same time.

These conditions were taken into account in many of the international decisions, which did not prescribe any specific steps to be taken but urged the affiliated organisations to pursue a given policy 'by every available means' or 'by every means in their power'. Resolutions containing such phrases were passed on numerous occasions, for instance, during the long struggles against unemployment, against Fascism and against war. Although these great problems were frequently the subject of international decisions the issues had, of course, to be fought out in each country. By means of international discussions the common features of the problems could be brought out and methods of meeting them could be suggested. Yet in the last resort the organisations in each country had to fight unemploy-

ment, Fascism and militarism not only in the international field but at home. And the methods chosen depended upon the form in which the problems presented themselves in the respective countries and upon the power and position of the organisations concerned.

This does not mean that the action taken had no international character at all. On the contrary, the fact that the labour movements in the different countries recognised the same dangers, fought against them by similar, if not identical means, and proposed remedies with common features, helped very considerably to emphasise that these were international problems calling for combined action by the Governments and peoples of the world. Moreover the action taken by the various labour movements was inspired by international discussions and decisions, and its effect in each country was enhanced by the fact that parallel action was being taken in others.

Sometimes the activities of the national organisations can be so co-ordinated or timed as to produce a really concerted movement. An example of this was provided by the petition campaign already mentioned. The signatures and resolutions in support of the petition were obtained in the different countries, but the international secretariats were able to stimulate and co-ordinate the efforts of the national organisations by issuing propaganda literature and by circulating reports on the methods adopted and results achieved from time to time. Moreover the petitions had a common text adopted after international discussion, the campaign took place in all of the countries during the same period and on similar lines, and the whole movement culminated in the presentation of the petition by an international delegation. For this purpose the leaders of the international organisations appeared at a public session of the Disarmament Conference at Geneva.<sup>1</sup>

Propaganda activities can also be co-ordinated on suitable occasions. The annual May Day demonstrations are an example of this. Here again, the actual date and nature of the celebrations is a matter for the organisations in the different countries. In some cases May Day is kept on the First of May, in others at the nearest week-end. It may be celebrated by meetings, by processions or by other forms of demonstration at the discretion of the national organisations. But it is always understood that May Day is to be an occasion for emphasising the international solidarity of labour. To this end the international organisations

<sup>1</sup>*Records of the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments: Series A, Verbatim Records of Plenary Meetings*, Vol. I (Ser. L.O.N.P. 1932. IX. 60). Geneva, 1932, pp. 198-200.

issue May Day manifestos drawing attention to the international issues of the day and formulating international demands for which the workers can be asked to demonstrate.

International Socialist Women's Day is another case in point. The labour women's organisations in the different countries organise an International Socialist Women's Day for the purpose of drawing attention to the special needs and problems of women—especially of working-class housewives and women in industry. International Socialist Women's Day is observed in different ways according to the circumstances in each country. It may not be a 'day' at all but an International Women's Month. But the international character of the event is always stressed. Where possible, speakers are exchanged between country and country, international messages are printed and read at the various meetings, and reports are published on the preparations for the event and the results achieved.

Another form of action which can often be combined is that of mutual aid by the provision of funds for relief. It will be remembered that the trade unions and trade union national centres may be called upon to help one another financially during strikes and lock-outs.<sup>1</sup> The amounts voted or collected for this purpose are usually forwarded through one of the international organisations, which is made responsible for organising the assistance and informing the affiliated organisations on the progress of the dispute. A similar line is followed with the relief campaigns.<sup>2</sup> The help given to the Spanish workers during the Civil War, the relief provided for the victims of political persecution in Fascist countries, and so on, came from funds raised by international action. The initiative was taken by the international organisations, which launched appeals, and the secretariats helped to stimulate the collection of funds, to administer the amounts received, and to keep the organisations supplied with the necessary information.

It will be noticed that combined action in relation to propaganda, relief and so on, can often be produced if the campaign is concentrated into a limited period, or aimed at a definite date, or if the interest is revived from time to time by new events.

Occasionally it has been possible to produce a measure of concerted action on more direct lines. The refusal of workers in a number of countries to handle goods intended for another country in which there is a labour dispute is an instance of this. But such a step is only possible in exceptional circumstances—as when the dispute strikes the imagination of the workers in

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter IV, pp. 144 and 183.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter III, p. 90, and Chapter IV, p. 142.

other countries by its size or arouses their sympathy by its unusual nature. And the support given in this way can usually only be maintained over a short period.

It has proved more difficult to organise a really international boycott of all the goods and services of a particular country. At the beginning of August 1933, the I.F.T.U. decided at its Brussels Congress to recommend the workers of the free countries to boycott German goods and services and thus to withdraw economic support from the Nazi régime.<sup>1</sup> The L.S.I. declared its support for this at the Paris Conference later in the month.<sup>2</sup> But although the affiliated organisations were urged to make the boycott effective it was never possible to develop a really concerted international campaign.

### *c. Propaganda*

It will be noted that one of the chief forms of international action taken by the labour movement is propaganda. In addition to the work of spreading information about their own activities and about developments in the different countries, the international organisations have the problem of organising publicity and propaganda in favour of the aims and objects, programmes and policies, formulated after international discussion. Meetings and conferences, demonstrations, literature, press publicity and so on, may all be used for this purpose. But once more the effectiveness of the work depends upon the co-operation of the affiliated organisations. International conferences may take decisions, and the international secretariats may use all their available means of publicity, but it still remains for the affiliated organisations to lay stress upon international considerations in their propaganda at home.

In their future propaganda the organisations of the labour movement will need to emphasise international problems and policies more and more. It is not only a question of international ideals and international goodwill. To an increasing extent they will have to assist in explaining how the political, economic and social problems of the world can be met by international action, what international machinery is necessary, and how the peoples of the different countries can play their part. In other words, their propaganda, while not neglecting theoretical, philosophical and emotional factors, must give increasing attention to the practical solutions required and the actual work to be done.

Some thought will have to be given, too, to the question of

<sup>1</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1930-32.* I.F.T.U., Paris, 1934, p. 403.

<sup>2</sup> *After the German Catastrophe.* L.S.I., Zurich, 1933.

new methods of propaganda. The trade unions and labour parties have had to consider this question in their own countries, but it calls for attention in the international field as well. It will be for these organisations, in their propaganda work at home, to make the masses of their members more acutely conscious of international problems—more internationally minded. But to do this they will need both material and facilities. The preparation of more international films under the auspices of the labour movement itself might be taken in hand.<sup>1</sup> More use might also be made of broadcasting facilities. A revived workers' wireless international would, of course, make its contribution to this work.<sup>2</sup> The experience gained by such international bodies as the International Transportworkers' Federation, the Miners' International Federation, and the International Metal Workers' Federation in the preparation of broadcasts to workers in collaboration with the B.B.C. could also be turned to account. But over and above this the labour movement in the different countries would need to give prominence to international issues in any radio programme for which they might be responsible. In some countries it was the practice before the war to set aside a certain amount of broadcasting time for workers' programmes. Such an arrangement provides an opportunity for talks and features on international topics as well as on other matters.

Much of the work of propaganda requires for its background the provision of improved facilities for Socialist and trade union education. Those who take part in this work must themselves be well informed on international subjects. The provision of opportunities for study has been primarily a matter for the International of Socialist Youth and the International Trade Union Committee for Youth and Educational Questions.<sup>3</sup> The activities of these bodies might well be extended and more strongly supported by other international organisations. Much could be done, in particular, to increase the knowledge and understanding of international affairs among Socialists and trade unionists by the provision of improved facilities for attendance at international schools and colleges and for foreign travel.

International propaganda by the labour movement is not a mere matter of campaigning for the narrow objects of particular organisations or interests. It has a far deeper significance. In so far as the labour movement succeeds in promoting international co-operation between the organised workers of the dif-

<sup>1</sup> See also Chapter II, p. 70.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter II, p. 71.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter II, p. 67.

ferent countries it is contributing in its own field towards the development of international co-operation in general.

There is another point. Co-operation between States and peoples is only possible if public opinion is behind it. This was emphasised some years ago by the Secretariat of the League of Nations, which points out in the publication already quoted that 'the progress of the League of Nations depends on public opinion'. But the Secretariat also showed that public opinion was made up of national opinions.<sup>1</sup>

As to the influence of public opinion the Secretariat expressed the view that 'public opinion must be a driving force towards accomplishment or it must be persuaded of the equity of particular measures or accomplishments submitted to its judgment. . . . The impulsion given by public opinion is a relatively simple thing; to convince public opinion, especially on an international scale in many States, is a different proposition. If people of various countries manifest a strong enough desire for their Governments to pursue a given policy, good or bad, it will not be difficult for the Governments of those countries to do so. But, if the Governments, in consultation through the League, contemplate a line of policy unfamiliar or unwelcome to the people of those countries, such Governments may well have an uphill task to win adequate support at home. A Government, with full approval at home, may cut a poor figure at an international conference, just as a Government winning applause for enlightened international views abroad may lose credit at home. Its policy and its conception of what its home opinion wants, of what it can be persuaded to accept, or of what it is ready to accept, constitute its contribution for good or ill to international co-operation.'

It follows from this that the general public needs to be more fully aware of the importance of international issues, more actively interested and better informed. The work of enlightening public opinion cannot be accomplished by Governments alone. Nor should it be. The press, the wireless, educational bodies, voluntary associations of all kinds—including the trade unions and the workers' political parties—should play their part. The workers constitute an important section of public opinion. Propaganda by the labour movement amongst its own members

<sup>1</sup> 'Public opinion on an international scale must be conceived largely as a collection of national opinions reacting to some extent upon each other. . . . There is a rough stratum of universal opinion, but the moment has not arrived when international questions can in practice be dealt with on a foundation of international thought.' *Ten Years of World Co-operation*. League of Nations, Geneva, 1930, pp. 398, 399.

must therefore have a profound effect on the outlook of the people as a whole.

*f. National and international considerations*

In deciding upon their methods and forms of action the international bodies have to strike a balance between international and national considerations. This is so in all fields of international co-operation and not only in the labour movement. The League of Nations, for example, experienced the same difficulty. In the above-mentioned volume it was pointed out that 'there is no League policy on any particular problem unless and until accommodation has been found between conflicting national interests and action finally agreed upon. Acceptance in the League of a given policy may lead to controversy within the borders of a country whose Government has consented to it. The League—that is to say, all the other States Members—has no authority to go inside that country, so to say, and to take up the case.'<sup>1</sup> What applied in the case of the League is equally true of the war-time co-operation between the United Nations.

Within the international labour movement the needs and desires of the organisations in the different countries had to be considered more and more as the international situation grew worse. After Hitler's rise to power in 1933 the task of reaching agreed international decisions became increasingly difficult. Countries reacted in different ways to the growing danger of Fascist war. The Governments themselves could not agree on joint action. In many Governments labour was represented and therefore shared the responsibility for the Government's policy. And although the labour movements of the different countries fully recognised the danger they differed as to how it should be met. The representatives of countries in which the workers' organisations had been suppressed called for uncompromising opposition to Fascism and Nazism. They had been driven out of their countries and their only hope for the future lay in the complete overthrow of the existing régime. There were countries where Fascism was a serious menace, though not yet in power, and others in which the danger was much less acute. In some cases the labour movements hoped that in the event of war it would be possible to pursue the line of neutrality. In Great Britain the policy of labour was to satisfy whatever legitimate grievances the aggressor Powers might have, but at the same time to be prepared for resisting aggression and intimidation.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ten Years of World Co-operation*. League of Nations, Geneva, 1930, p. 400.

<sup>2</sup> *International Policy and Defence*. Published by the National Council of Labour, London, 1937.



In these circumstances it became more difficult than ever to reach agreement on the action to be taken. The labour movements realised only too clearly that Fascism and war were dangers to be faced throughout the world, yet in many of the critical situations that arose the actual methods to be employed for resisting these dangers had to be left to the discretion of the organisations in the different countries.

This unpleasant necessity was brought home at the Paris Conference of the L.S.I. a few months after Hitler came to power. The Conference was held in August 1933 to decide upon 'the strategy and tactics of the labour movement during the period of Fascist reaction'. One of the strongest sections of the International—the German Social-Democratic Party—had been smashed. Were the labour movements of other countries to be destroyed one by one, or could they combine to defeat the common enemy? After several days of discussion a policy was agreed upon, but the Conference resolution frankly admitted that different ways would have to be followed in different countries.<sup>1</sup>

Certain specific proposals were however adopted. The Conference suggested that all Socialist parties should organise mass demonstrations against Fascism during the week in which the anniversary of the German revolution of 1918 was due to fall (this anniversary could no longer be celebrated in Germany itself); that the parties should further with all their resources the work of relief organised by the Matteotti Fund for the victims of German Fascism; and that the L.S.I. should participate in every endeavour directed towards strengthening the moral and material boycott of Hitlerism.<sup>2</sup> These suggestions could be adopted without much difficulty, since each party was free to decide for itself as to how they should be carried out.

One other decision was that the L.S.I. should call upon the democratic Governments to bring before the League of Nations all the problems raised by the victory of Hitlerism which threatened the peace of Europe—and especially the rearmament of Germany and the action taken against Austria and Danzig.<sup>3</sup> Here, too, the responsibility for pressing this suggestion upon the various Governments was a matter for the affiliated parties—who differed in their relations towards their Governments, in

<sup>1</sup> *After the German Catastrophe*. L.S.I., Zurich, 1933. See also Chapter III, p. 80.

<sup>2</sup> *After the German Catastrophe*. L.S.I., Zurich, 1933.

<sup>3</sup> *After the German Catastrophe*. L.S.I., Zurich, 1933. See also *Proceedings of the Conference*, published by the L.S.I., Zurich, 1933.

their appreciation of the extent of the danger and in their view of the possibility for action of this kind.<sup>1</sup>

In such a situation combined action by the labour movements of the different countries was not to be expected. It actually became more difficult to agree upon common policies, even though the action to be taken in support of them could be left to the discretion of the organisations in each country. The dilemma which confronted the L.S.I. at the Paris Conference presented itself again with each subsequent crisis. The disruption of the Austrian labour movement in 1934, the Italian attack upon Abyssinia in 1935, the revolt of General Franco in Spain and so on—all threw up the problem not only of what to do but even of what to say. And the underlying reason for the predicament was that the organisations of the different countries could not recognise any common international interest strong enough to unite them in the face of the national considerations by which they were influenced. But the labour movement was not alone in this. Governments, parliaments and public opinion generally were likewise unable to agree on common policies and collective action. It is against the background of their failure that the difficulties of the labour movement must be viewed.

In the end the task of working out agreed international policies and common lines of action became virtually impossible. On minor issues agreement could still be found but on the great political problems of preventing war and resisting Fascism the national considerations dominated more and more. Sometimes there were discussions which led to no decisions, because to have published a resolution would have underlined the differences and weakened the affiliated organisations in their action at home. This reluctance to speak was most marked in the case of the L.S.I. It was less evident on the trade union side as the unions were not responsible in the same way as the political parties for parliamentary and Government policy.

Proposals for international action, in the labour movement, have to take account both of the views of the national sections and of their opportunities for action in their respective countries. No affiliated party or trade union could be expected to agree to a decision which it knew could not be carried out. And there would be no point in attempting to impose resolutions by a majority vote. The decisions therefore have to represent the

<sup>1</sup> Yet in the same resolution the following passage occurs: 'The Conference expresses its conviction that in the face of the peril to civilisation of the growing wave of nationalist Fascism, it is necessary to unify international action and to ensure greater solidarity and closer co-ordination in the action of the workers in all countries. It rejects all concessions to nationalism and any compromise with it.'

greatest common measure of agreement as to what is possible or desirable—not simply as a general principle but in the light of actual conditions in the different countries.

This necessity for paying regard to national considerations influences both the substance of the decision and the way in which it is expressed. It is not enough for the organisations to agree on a particular opinion or course of action. They also have to consider the terms in which their agreement is to be presented. At international meetings and conferences therefore many hours are spent in determining the exact form of words for the different resolutions. Some delegates may feel that their members would wish them to use the language of revolution. Others may think that the resolution would carry greater weight in their particular countries if its terms were more restrained.<sup>1</sup> Some may be more concerned than others about the publicity that may be given to the resolution both by the labour journals and by the press in general. The resolution might, for example, be used in an election campaign, or in a parliamentary debate, or in an important political controversy. It may be a question of the general tone of the text, or of certain critical phrases, or even of the meaning given to particular expressions in different languages or countries. And so a great deal of effort may have to be spent in seeking terms that will 'give satisfaction' all round. It is rather like the search for a 'formula' at conferences between Governments.<sup>2</sup>

### 3. HOW DECISIONS ARE REACHED

In view of these circumstances considerable importance attaches to the actual method by which decisions are reached. Mention has already been made of the ways in which voting power is assessed.<sup>3</sup> In committees the rule may be one vote for each member or country. At congresses and conferences provision is made for the organisations represented to vote according

<sup>1</sup> At the Paris Conference of the L.S.I., for example, Otto Bauer, the Austrian Socialist leader who spoke on behalf of the Commission appointed by the Conference to work out a resolution, mentioned that the British delegate had warned the Commission against 'dramatising history'. Bauer replied that they were not trying to dramatise history but that history in Central Europe was terribly dramatic in itself. He pointed to the needs of the German Socialists and trade unionists who were trying to keep their faith alive in the face of terrorism, and to the trials of the Austrian workers fighting against both German Nazism and the Austrian form of Fascism. They could not be addressed in the same terms as workers in more 'fortunate' countries. *After the German Catastrophe*. L.S.I., Zurich, 1933.

<sup>2</sup> See also Bjarne Braatoy: *Labour and War*. Allen & Unwin, 1934, especially the sections on Labour Forces and Labour Action to Prevent War.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter V, p. 174.

to their strength, though this practice is not always followed. On the trade union side the votes are usually assessed on the basis of affiliated membership, while in the case of the L.S.I. there is a more complex calculation taking account of other factors as well. But in practice the machinery for registering decisions is of less importance than the procedure for reaching substantial agreement before a vote is taken.

If adequate consideration is to be given to the views of the various national organisations there must of course be an opportunity for those views to be fully expressed before any decision is made. At a meeting of a small body, such as an Executive or Management Committee, every member has an opportunity to speak, and decisions can usually be reached by agreement. In difficult cases—as when the committee has to make a pronouncement on an important political issue or question of principle—a small drafting committee is sometimes appointed to prepare an agreed text which takes the different points of view into consideration. At a big conference or congress it is not possible for all delegates to take the rostrum, but it is usual for at least one speaker to be heard from each country. The subject is then referred to a specially-appointed committee, which attempts to reach agreement on a resolution to be submitted to the full body for adoption. This committee may in its turn appoint a drafting committee to produce a preliminary text. By the time the conference or congress is called upon to vote on the resolution every national section will have had a full opportunity of explaining its point of view.

At these international gatherings it is usual for the text to be built up in this way, rather than for the delegates to be asked to vote on a resolution sent in beforehand. In this the international practice differs from the method adopted by many of the conferences of national organisations (such as, for example, the Trades Union Congress or the Labour Party Conference) which take their decisions on resolutions and amendments circulated in advance of the discussion. Where proposals are submitted beforehand for an international conference it is usual for them to be referred to a committee after a general debate. But more often than not the conference meets without a definite text before it, and the actual draft is made after the various opinions have been heard.

This procedure enables the international body to make a real attempt to bring the national points of view together into a decision that will command general support. It would be too much to expect an individual, or a committee of a single national organisation, to draft, in advance of an international

discussion, a resolution that representatives from a number of countries could vote on as it stood. However experienced and well-informed they might be, they could hardly foresee the various reactions that a draft might produce or the practical difficulties that might arise from country to country. But in an international discussion the representatives of the various countries can explain their situation, bring out the possibilities, express their desires and hopes, and enter their objections. Moreover if the draft arises out of the discussion there can be no suggestion that one section of the organisation is asking others to accept something which has already been cut and dried.

In most cases this process ensures that the final text will be accepted either unanimously or by an overwhelming majority. Doubts may subsequently be raised in full conference, in spite of the agreement achieved in committee, but most organisations will accept the conclusions that the committee has reached. When decisions are adopted in this way it follows that the organisations from the countries most closely concerned are prepared to agree to them. They may not be completely satisfied but at least they know that a decision is not being imposed on them. The interested organisations may be from countries which would have to bear the main burden of the action, or from a country in which the problem under discussion has actually arisen. The views of such bodies must, of course, be given every consideration, otherwise the decision would be unreal and unworkable.

When the time comes for the decision to be taken, it is, however, necessary for the delegates or members to vote. If the matter has been thrashed out in committee the nature of the decision will be a foregone conclusion, but it still remains to be ascertained whether the agreement will be unanimous or whether actual votes will have to be recorded. In the international organisations of the labour movement decisions are taken by a simple majority. There is no unanimity rule, nor is it necessary for a two-thirds majority to be secured. The delegates vote either by a show of hands on the basis of one vote for each delegate—or for each country—or by a card vote in which the number of votes for each organisation varies according to its strength.

Usually a committee decision is taken by general agreement. Even at a congress or conference the voting is frequently unanimous, or nearly so. At the last three congresses of the I.F.T.U. practically all the decisions were carried either unanimously or without dissent because of the fact that agreement had already been reached in committee. The Brussels Congress in 1933, for

example, unanimously adopted resolutions on war and disarmament, the boycotting of Nazi Germany and an international educational programme. An amendment to a resolution on economic planning was rejected by a majority and then the resolution itself was carried unanimously. A set of 'guiding principles' for social policy was likewise carried, after a proposed amendment had been referred by a majority to the Executive.<sup>1</sup>

At the London Congress in 1936 there were unanimous votes in favour of resolutions on the fight against the crisis, economic planning, the Fascist terror and trade union liberty. A resolution on trade union unity—the problem of relations with the Russian unions—was carried unanimously after many hours of debate both in full session and in committee. And a resolution on war, disarmament and Fascism was adopted *nem con.*<sup>2</sup>

Finally, at the Zurich Congress in 1939 there were unanimous decisions in favour of resolutions on the slump, hours of work, the economic activities of the I.F.T.U., racial persecution, and the Japanese attack on China. A resolution on the defence of peace was sent back to the committee and subsequently carried, though three countries (Denmark, Finland and Sweden) refrained from voting. The votes were divided, however, on the question of the affiliation of the Russian trade unions; 60 votes were cast for a proposal to endorse a previous decision of the General Council and 5 against (the Mexican votes), while there were 18 abstentions (the votes of France and Norway).<sup>3</sup>

Unanimous decisions were also recorded by the L.S.I., particularly at meetings of the Executive and Bureau. At the last Congress of the L.S.I., held in Vienna in 1931, a programme of action in favour of disarmament was adopted unanimously. The other decisions were taken by overwhelming majorities. Thus the main resolution on disarmament was carried by 304 votes to 5 (the votes of the British I.L.P., the Polish Independent Socialist Party, and the Polish 'Bund'), with 8 abstentions (the votes of the Swiss party). A resolution on naval disarmament was adopted by 312 votes to 5. The same 5 votes were cast against the resolution but this time the Swiss party voted in favour! Two proposals were put to the vote on the subject of the situation in Germany and central Europe and the fight of the working class for democracy. The main resolution, submitted by the committee, secured 316 votes while 5 were cast in favour of a resolution tabled by the I.L.P. A committee

<sup>1</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1930-32.* I.F.T.U., Paris, 1934.

<sup>2</sup> *I.F.T.U., Triennial Report, 1933-35, Congress, London, 1936.* I.F.T.U., Paris, 1937.

<sup>3</sup> *The International Trade Union Movement.* I.F.T.U., Paris, Vol. XIX, Nos. 6-7, June-July 1939. See also Chapter IV, p. 142.

resolution on the world economic crisis and unemployment was likewise carried, after a counter-proposal had been defeated by 5 votes to 299.<sup>1</sup>

At the Paris Conference in 1933 a resolution of protest against anti-Semitic demagoguery was carried unanimously while the other two decisions were taken by heavy majorities. Only one organisation, the 'Bund', voted flatly against the resolutions, but several other parties split their votes or withheld them. On the main resolution relating to the strategy and tactics of the international labour movement during the period of Fascist reaction the French Socialist Party cast 21 votes for and 5 against; other parties which split their votes were Estonia 2 for and 1 against, Italy 14 and 2, and the United States 4 and 7. The Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party cast 4 votes for and withheld 2. The other resolution was on disarmament. In this case the French vote was 9 for and 5 against, with 12 abstentions. Italy cast 12 for and 2 against with 2 abstentions. The Lithuanian party gave 1 vote in favour and withheld 1, while the Russian Social-Democrats cast 2 against and withheld 4. The Americans voted as before. On each occasion the Georgians abstained. The fact that the votes were split in this way showed how acutely some of the parties were divided on this important issue. On the main resolution the full figures were 291 for, 18 against and 5 abstentions, while the disarmament resolution was carried by 273 to 19, with 22 abstentions.<sup>2</sup>

Votes taken in such circumstances clearly do not decide an issue, as the result can be foreseen from the outcome of the discussions in committee. But they serve the purpose of registering dissent and of demonstrating the actual strength of the majority in cases in which agreed solutions are impossible. On the issues mentioned above a real attempt was made to reach all-round agreement, but in some cases the differences of opinion were too great. In the end there was no alternative but to recognise the differences and to carry the resolutions by a majority vote.

Thus the question of trade union unity, which dominated the last Congress of the I.F.T.U. on the eve of the war, had been a thorny problem for many years. Opinions were divided as to the desirability or otherwise of organised relationships with the Russian unions, while even those who favoured the inclusion of the Russians in the I.F.T.U. differed as to whether they should be approached or not. This problem had been the main subject of debate at the London Congress in 1936. On that occa-

<sup>1</sup>*Fourth Congress of the L.S.I., Vienna, 1931, Sections VI and VII.*

<sup>2</sup>*After the German Catastrophe. L.S.I., Zurich, 1933.*

sion the Chairman of the committee (E. Kupers, Holland) pointed out that after considering numerous amendments the committee had realised 'that it was indispensable to produce a draft resolution which would be acceptable to the whole Congress'. And the Congress President (Sir Walter Citrine, Great Britain) said that the text presented to the Congress, while it embodied the unanimous conclusions of the committee 'represented, as was bound to be the case, a compromise between different points of view'.<sup>1</sup> Such a compromise proved to be unobtainable at the Congress in 1939.

At the Vienna Congress of the L.S.I. in 1931 the three dissenting parties had a profoundly different approach from that of the majority. Even the other parties were not of one mind, but they were prepared to accept a series of resolutions which embodied the greatest measure of general agreement that could be secured at the time. By voting against the resolutions the I.L.P., the Polish Independent Socialist Party, and the 'Bund', reserved their full freedom of action and their right to oppose the policy of the International on the questions at issue.

In the case of the Paris Conference the reason for the failure to reach general agreement was that many of the parties were themselves divided in their reading of the lessons of 'The German Catastrophe' and in their view of the action to be taken in the new situation. Were more radical policies required? Could combined international action be achieved? Must each country face the danger in its own way? The Conference felt that time was pressing, but there had been too little time for the issues to clear. In the circumstances unanimous agreement was out of the question. The matters were decided by a majority vote and, as has been seen, some parties were even obliged to divide up their votes in order to reflect the different opinions within their own delegations.

Despite these examples of decisions by majority vote it has been recognised to an increasing extent that agreed decisions should be secured wherever possible. That being so, the actual number of votes held by a party or other national organisation becomes less important, since no country can be coerced into action, however great may be the majority against it. In practice, therefore, the decisions are most frequently taken on the basis of one vote for each delegate or country.

In any case the decisions do not become operative in any country until the organisations in that country have decided what action they will take. The delegates at an international

<sup>1</sup> I.F.T.U., *Triennial Report, 1933-35, Congress, London, 1936*. I.F.T.U., Paris, 1937, p. 443.



conference in the labour movement have to report back to their organisations, and they may find a different view taken at home from the one which they acted upon in the atmosphere of an international meeting or conference.<sup>1</sup> The possibility of securing approval for their actions is of course greater if the decisions are unanimous. But the main reason for attempting to reach agreed decisions is that no organisation can be compelled to carry out in its own country a decision with which it does not agree. In theory the organisations with the largest number of votes could dictate to the others but in practice this is impossible. They might be able to dominate the policy of an international organisation, but they could not dominate its action in the different countries.

#### 4. VALUE OF PAST ACTIVITIES

International work in the labour movement, then, is liable to a number of very real limiting factors. With these in mind it is possible to form a clearer idea of the movement's past activities. An account of the kind of work carried on by the international organisations has already been given.<sup>2</sup> How can this work be measured? What has actually been achieved?

##### *a. Organised Co-operation*

One of the most significant achievements of the labour movement is that it has been able, through its international organisations, to develop co-operation between the workers of the different countries on an organised basis. The fact that there has been organised endeavour and not simply occasional contact has been of considerable importance. The labour movements of the different countries have preached the international brotherhood of man from the beginning. They have fostered a desire for international friendship; they have shown a willingness to help each other in times of trouble; they have tried to strengthen the bonds of sympathy between the workers of different countries by underlining their common problems and interests. But goodwill is not enough. Unless there had been organised and continuous activity little of lasting benefit would have been secured.

Organisation is as necessary in the international sphere as it

<sup>1</sup> This also applied in the case of the League of Nations—see also the rule of the I.L.O. that Draft Conventions agreed upon at an International Labour Conference do not come into force in a country until ratified by the competent authority there.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapters III and IV.

is in the respective countries. The workers have had their trade unions, political parties and other organisations, but these could have achieved very little internationally if they had merely held occasional conferences and tried to help each other in times of international difficulty. In trade union work it has been found that regular machinery is necessary for promoting better relations between employers and workers. Similarly, with the development of co-operation between nations; occasional meetings of representatives of Governments, of labour or of other interests do not suffice. There must be organised arrangements for continuous effort in the various fields. The Governments have found it necessary to establish the machinery of the League of Nations, the I.L.O. and many other inter-governmental institutions as well. In the same way, the Socialist parties, trade unions and other working-class bodies have built up their own international organisations. Where there have only been loose contacts and intermittent activities the work has been least effective. It has been most fruitful where it has been organised and continuous.

Even to hold the organisations together was an achievement in itself. The international bodies in the labour movement have been subjected to terrific strains. During the difficult period from 1933 onwards there were times when loyalty to the international organisations was sorely tried. There must have been numerous occasions when Socialist members of Governments were embarrassed by international discussions and decisions—when, for example, suggestions were made regarding resistance to Fascism or collective action against German aggression which clashed with the policy they were pursuing in their own countries. And in more than one country the international connections of labour provided arguments for violent and sustained attacks upon the movement. Yet there were few, if any, voluntary withdrawals. The losses suffered by the international organisations were due to the destruction in various countries of the labour movement itself; but even in these cases the connection was kept up by underground organisations or by emigrés.

When at last war came, the difficulty of maintaining organised contacts increased. During the last war the international organisations were completely broken up, but this time some of them have maintained themselves in being and carried on with much of their work, while others are ready to resume their activities as soon as they can restore contact with a sufficient number of countries. The ability of these organisations to survive such conditions is a significant fact in itself. Moreover, on this occasion the international labour movement has not been divided on the

subject of the war. In so far as it has been able to function it has endeavoured to assist the war effort. The affiliated organisations have, generally speaking, been agreed on the nature and causes of the war. When the time comes for a renewal of their contacts this is not likely to be one of the issues that will stand in the way.

### *b. International Understanding*

Through its international organisations the labour movement has been able to develop international understanding amongst the workers of the different countries, and thus to improve international feeling amongst the peoples generally. Even though the nations are now divided by war this still remains true. Ever since the last war the labour movement has fought against a recrudescence of war, against unemployment and against the growth of Fascism. Although the movement in each country had to wage its battles on its own national territory those engagements were part of the same world-wide campaign. During that long struggle the organised workers of the different countries came to feel more profoundly than ever that they were facing the same problems, opposing the same enemies, suffering for the same convictions and fighting for the same ideals. These feelings had sunk in too deeply for them to be completely swept away by the outbreak of a new war.

It has been noticeable that sentiments of sympathy and goodwill have not been confined to the workers of the United Nations. There has also been a wide measure of understanding on their part for the position of the workers in neutral countries, in the satellite States which have swung into line behind the Axis, and even in Germany itself. Indeed, it is quite possible that there is too great a readiness to make excuses for the crimes committed in Germany's name and to absolve the German workers from their share of the blame.

Be that as it may, the existence of these feelings of international friendship and understanding amongst the workers has been one of the factors which have contributed to the solidarity of the United Nations during the war. It has, moreover, been a great source of moral strength to the workers in the underground resistance movements in their time of danger and sacrifice. And it will help the nations to work together in a common endeavour when the war is over. Through its international connections the labour movement has endeavoured to keep these sentiments alive. Its war-time propaganda and publicity work, in the press and over the wireless, has been largely devoted to this end.

That has been not the least of labour's services to the war effort.

c. *Knowledge of International Affairs*

But feelings of friendship may be a source of weakness, and even of danger, if they are not based upon knowledge—knowledge of the conditions, interests, policies and problems of the different countries. Although, as already indicated,<sup>1</sup> the facilities of the international organisations for publicity and propaganda, information and research, study and discussion, need to be extended, the international labour movement has, in fact, performed a remarkable service in spreading a knowledge of international problems amongst the working class.

To begin with, the organised workers of to-day know far more about the lives and conditions of workers in other countries than they did, say, at the end of the last war. This is particularly the case in the great international industries, such as transport, iron and steel, coal, textiles and so on. Although detailed information can only be possessed by a relatively small number of officials and interested members, the general level of knowledge has certainly improved.

There is also a greater knowledge of international problems in general. The proceedings at international conferences and meetings have been for considerable numbers of delegates and visitors an education in themselves. Moreover, the articles and discussions which have preceded these gatherings, the necessity of preparing documents and proposals, the publicity given to the events at the time, and the subsequent publication of reports, have all focused the attention of workers upon international questions. As a result, there is both an increased awareness of the nature and variety of international problems and a wider knowledge of the issues involved.

All this helped the workers of the different countries to understand more fully what was happening in the world at large—the causes and effects of the economic crisis, the reasons for the spread of Fascism, and the factors that were hastening the approach of another world war. It gave them a clearer idea of what the war was about. And it will help them to form a balanced and informed opinion of the problems that will have to be solved when the war is over.

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 230.

#### d. *Practical Work*

Account must also be taken of the practical work performed by the international organisations—in providing mutual aid, in improving the conditions of labour, in their international action on the political side, and so on.

There can be no doubt of the effects produced by the work of the international organisations in raising funds for the support of workers involved in serious industrial disputes, in caring for the individual victims of Fascism and dictatorship, and in providing material assistance for the workers' organisations engaged in such great struggles as the defence of democracy in Austria and Spain; such activities have deepened the sense of international solidarity both in the countries which were assisted and in those in which funds were collected. Nor can there be any question about the results of international action in raising the standards of labour. Not all of this work has been done by trade unions within their own countries. Some of it has been achieved by international action through the International Trade Secretariats. And of course the labour movement has been able to carry out a good deal of practical work through the channels of the I.L.O.

In the political field the practical effects of international action by the labour movement are less obvious though not less important. Since a large part of the work of the Internationals is performed by the organisations in the different countries it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between actions carried out entirely on the initiative of the national bodies and those which are in fact part of an international campaign. It often happens, therefore, that an intervention in parliament or a Government decision, or a policy pursued by ministers at an international conference, may have been inspired by discussions and decisions in the international labour movement.

#### e. *Pressure and Propaganda*

In achieving these results the international labour movement has relied largely upon the influence which it has been able to exercise upon public opinion. A study of the methods of action employed by the international labour organisations<sup>1</sup> reveals that they have made very wide use of the methods of propaganda and pressure. In this their main targets have been public opinion in general and Governments and parliaments in particular.

The influence of the affiliated organisations has been used to

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 232-236.

exercise pressure upon Governments and parliaments, and all the usual means of publicity and propaganda have been employed to arouse public opinion. It is noticeable, however, that many of the pronouncements of the international organisations—resolutions, manifestos, declarations—have taken the form of protests. A protest can often appear to be an expedient adopted by the international organisations because of their impotence. Sometimes, indeed, it is the only method that can be used in the given circumstances. But it is a legitimate weapon nevertheless, and a weapon that can on occasion be highly effective. The danger is that the organisations might rely too heavily upon manifestos and appeals, think too much in terms of protest and defiance, fix themselves in an attitude of permanent opposition, and neglect to develop the more practical, if less dramatic, side of their work.

Nevertheless, great stress must continue to be laid upon the methods of pressure and propaganda, since the international organisations in the labour movement are obliged to work to such a large extent through other institutions and agencies. It is not often that they can attain their objectives entirely by their own action. In carrying out their policies they need not only the co-operation of their national sections but also the support of public opinion and the press. And many of their aims can only be achieved if the necessary action is taken by Governments. The international organisations in the labour movement could not, for example, bring about disarmament by their own efforts, any more than could the League of Nations. Nor could they alone establish a system of collective security. Nor again, could they themselves provide the means for solving the problem of unemployment. All these are matters for Governments and parliaments.

It was at one time thought that labour alone could prevent war. If the workers would only refuse to fight against their comrades in other countries then war would be impossible! But this has never been proved. At the Brussels Congress of the I.F.T.U. in 1933, following the establishment of the Nazi régime in Germany, it was declared in a unanimous resolution on war and disarmament that 'the general strike is the ultimate weapon of the working class against war'.<sup>1</sup> There was nothing new in this, but it was thought necessary to reaffirm belief in the strike weapon in view of the Nazi threat to peace.

At the Paris Conference shortly afterwards the L.S.I. expressed its agreement with the resolution of the I.F.T.U. and

<sup>1</sup> *The Activities of the I.F.T.U., 1930-32*. I.F.T.U., Paris, 1934, pp. 352 and 404.

warned the workers against being drawn into another war—even if it were to be a war of liberation.<sup>1</sup> Yet in 1939, when war was imminent there was no general strike, nor did the international organisations suggest that there should be. In this matter, as in so many others, they could not have acted in isolation. Moreover, there was no longer an organised working-class movement which could have brought about a strike in the aggressor country itself, i.e. in Germany.

### 5. SUCCESS OR FAILURE

There is a widespread belief that the international organisations of the labour movement have failed completely in what they set out to do. But the answer to the question whether they failed or succeeded must be related to the success or failure of their constituent organisations in the different countries and to the success or failure of international institutions in general.

It is pointed out that they failed to prevent war. But the same can be said of the League of Nations, the Governments and peoples generally. They failed to prevent the growth of Fascism and dictatorship. But so did the democratic Governments, the parliaments, the liberal and progressive parties and the free press. They failed to prevent unemployment. But so did the national Governments, the employers' organisations, the financiers and the economists.<sup>2</sup>

Whatever failures there may have been, then, they were not confined to the labour movement but were setbacks for international co-operation as a whole. Nor were they always failures for the international organisations as such; the record of the international bodies must be considered in relation to what their national sections were able to achieve in their own countries.

<sup>1</sup> *After the German Catastrophe*. L.S.I., Zurich, 1933.

<sup>2</sup> The League of Nations, said Karl Kautsky in 1937, has failed to fulfil many of our expectations. But is that a reason for rejecting it? It is the same with the League as with democracy and democratic parliamentarianism. The free organisations of the workers, like the democratic States and parliament, have often bitterly disappointed us, and that has caused many friends of the working class to condemn as worthless, not only parliaments but also trade unions, labour parties, etc. Before uttering such a condemnation, said Kautsky, the question should be asked whether the purpose of the condemned institution could be achieved more quickly and surely by another. But for the free labour parties and trade unions there is now only the alternative of compulsory organisations set up and administered by the authorities, and for democratic constitutions and parliaments only the alternative of the despotic rule of an individual, the dictator. Finally, there is for the League of Nations only the alternative of war. A Socialist who rejects these alternatives must accept Social-Democracy, the free trade union, the democratic form of the State and its parliamentarianism, and also the League of Nations. He simply has to endeavour to improve these institutions as far as possible and to remove their deficiencies. Karl Kautsky: *Sozialisten und Krieg*. Orbis-Verlag A.-G., Prague, 1937, p. 640.

In other words, the answer to the question whether they succeeded or failed must be related to economic and political conditions. The organisations were most successful when economic conditions were on the whole improving, when the international atmosphere was relatively free from great political disturbances, and when Governments and parliaments, the press and the public were therefore more responsive to their policies. They were less successful when world economic and political conditions deteriorated, that is to say, when Governments and peoples thought more and more of purely national considerations and when all forms of international co-operation accordingly became more difficult.

When considering the conditions for the successful functioning of the international organisations of the labour movement it must always be borne in mind that there are occasions when their activities in great international crises can be made easier or more difficult by the actions of Governments. There have indeed been cases in which the success or failure of the efforts of international labour can only be understood in the light of what the Governments were doing at the time. The decision of the labour movement to support sanctions against Fascist Italy was effective as long as the Governments were willing to apply pressure themselves.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the labour movements in the different countries were only able to help the Republicans during the civil war in Spain by sending them food, clothing and medical supplies and by supporting their cause in parliament, press, the League of Nations and so on. They were not able to send arms and ammunition to Spain in the face of the opposition of their respective Governments.

If the international labour movement is to play a greater part in ensuring peace, economic progress and social security, its place in international society will have to be reconsidered. There is a noticeable difference in the official attitude towards the international organisations of the labour movement and the organisations in the different countries. There has been a tendency for Governments and public opinion to recognise the place of the labour movement in the political, economic and social affairs of the nations, and for the labour movement itself to accept this recognition and even to claim it. But in the international sphere the movement towards recognition has lagged behind. Thus, although Governments have shown an increasing willingness to work with the trade unions nationally, and although the labour and Socialist parties have held seats in many Governments—including the Governments of practically all the coun-

<sup>1</sup> See also Chapter V, p. 192.



tries of Europe—the international organisations of the labour movement have usually been in opposition to Governments.

A new approach to this problem will need to be made by Governments, employers and public opinion, and by the labour movement itself. On the one hand, the Governments will need to decide whether they wish for the participation of the international organisations of labour in handling international problems, while on the other hand, the labour movement itself will need to say whether it is prepared to accept in the international sphere the responsibilities which it has been claiming in the various countries.

In many countries the labour movement has now accepted the view that its future must lie within the framework of society and not in a struggle against it. This does not mean that the movement abandons its belief in the need for fundamental changes but that it is prepared to work for those changes as a partner in society rather than by waging an unending struggle against the rest of the community and thus accepting a position of permanent inferiority. Not all the labour movements have yet come round to this point of view, and even in those that have there are still many people who think in terms of a romantic struggle between the workers and the rest, in which the final victory will be won at the barricades. Revolutionary situations may of course arise, as in the countries subjugated by the Germans, but in most cases the movement will depend for its advance upon solid constructive work in co-operation with other elements of the community—in parliament, local government, collective bargaining and so on.

A similar line might be pursued in the international sphere. But the labour movements in the different countries would need to decide whether they wished their international organisations to give a greater part of their attention to the practical work of handling international problems. The conditions of 1864 are not those of 1944. When the 'Address' to working men was published<sup>1</sup> there was no possibility of such collaboration even in the national sphere, but to-day the international organisations of the labour movement might play as important a part in international affairs as the labour movement has been playing in the affairs of the separate countries.

In recent years the labour movement in many countries has been revising its attitude towards the State and its institutions. It has been maintained, for example, that the State is an instrument of oppression and exploitation in the hands of capitalists and landowners, that 'bourgeois democracy' is not truly demo-

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter I, p. 4.

cratic but exists to serve the ends of the ruling classes, that the workers should not take part in the defence of their national territory because the country is not really theirs, and so on. But these ideas have lost much of their force. The workers, for example, have gained increased influence in the affairs of the State, both politically and economically. Democracy, even with its imperfections, had to be defended against the encroachments of Fascism.<sup>1</sup> National territory had to be defended against naked aggression.

The whole question of the position of trade unions in the State was under discussion at the outbreak of war, and proposals for restating the attitude of the unions were put before the last Congress of the I.F.T.U. in 1939.<sup>2</sup> One of the points raised by the Rapporteur, E. Kupers (Holland), indeed, was that since the trade unions, whatever might be the form of the State, had to safeguard the economic interests of the workers, their attitude towards the State was bound to be affected by what was done with regard to economic problems. If the State concerned itself seriously with its economic obligations (and this was implied by the developments at the time) the trade unions would have to consider not only their legal status but the question of their systematic co-operation in the organisation of economic relationships.<sup>3</sup>

## 6. FUNCTIONS OF THE NEW INTERNATIONALS

When the international bodies in the labour movement are able to begin their peace-time activities, one of their most serious

<sup>1</sup> Speaking at the Paris Conference of the L.S.I. on the need of the workers to defend democracy, Otto Bauer (Austria), who submitted the resolutions on behalf of the committee, said that the speech of his Swiss friend, Grimm, at the Conference had pleased him most of all. When he heard Grimm sharply criticising the weaknesses, the failures and the inadequacy of 'bourgeois democracy' he was delighted. 'For that showed me,' he said, 'that there was no serious danger of Fascism in Switzerland.' *After the German Catastrophe*, L.S.I., Zurich, 1933.

<sup>2</sup> *International Trade Union Movement*. I.F.T.U., Paris, Vol. XIX, Nos. 6-7, June-July, 1939, p. 203. See also Chapter IV, p. 129.

<sup>3</sup> In a report published by the I.F.T.U. on *The Trade Unions and Labour Policy in Scandinavia*, it was pointed out that there had been a tendency to consider that the freedom of the trade unions within the State prohibited them from co-operating with the State. But while agreeing with the importance of maintaining freedom of association the report emphasised that this did not restrict the freedom of the trade unions to co-operate with the State when progressive forces took the lead in political matters. 'It is no use the trade unions drawing up detailed plans for economic and social recovery if they do not consider the means by which their plans may be realised. . . . The mere presentation of trade union plans for economic policy is not enough if the trade unions have no say in the matter when decisions are made.' *The International Trade Union Movement*, I.F.T.U., Paris, Vol. XIX, Nos. 1-2, January-February, 1939.

problems will be that of defining their functions in the new conditions of the post-war world. After the war they will wish to rebuild and extend their organisations. They will need to secure affiliations all over the world and to develop a world outlook even if their most immediate interests continue for some time to be European. But what purposes will they be intended to serve? Whether the pre-war organisations resume their activities, or whether new organisations are established, new methods will be needed to meet the changed conditions and there will be scope for the exercise of new functions.

Is the most useful work of the international organisations that of helping to establish and maintain peace and social security by promoting international understanding amongst the working class? Is their main function to be that of working out policies—proposing international solutions for the great economic and political problems of the world—and then advocating those policies in the different countries through Governments and parliaments, the political parties and the trade unions, the economic and social institutions, the press and the platform, with a view to influencing State action, legislation and public opinion? This kind of work can constitute a powerful support for Government action when Governments are pursuing policies with which labour is substantially in agreement. And it can be a salutary corrective when Governments are failing to respond sufficiently to the desires of public opinion. There may be differences of view about the actual policies of labour's international organisations at given moments, but none can object to the interests which those policies are intended to promote—peace, democracy, economic well-being, social progress and the like. Because objects of this kind were always at the back of their endeavours the Internationals have had a profound influence upon public opinion, both in the long run and at moments of crisis.

Although activities of this kind will obviously continue, it seems clear that the principal Internationals at least—the L.S.I., the I.F.T.U. and the International Trade Secretariats—will tend to become something more than policy-making and propaganda bodies. The indications are that they may be more closely associated with the work of official institutions set up to deal with international problems, and that they will thus continue in the international sphere the development towards enhanced status and increasing responsibility for labour which has been taking place in many parts of the world. Will the international organisations press for the right to participate in this work, and will the struggle for recognition be as bitter as it has been in the separate countries?

The great economic, political and social problems of the world will call for more co-operation between nations. New institutions will be required to handle the growing number of international problems. There will in fact have to be more international government. But international problems cannot be solved satisfactorily if they are approached from a purely national point of view. It would therefore be an advantage if the international institutions set up by the States of the world could make arrangements for securing the help of people who represent international organisations as well as those who represent countries, and who can advise on the international implications of the problems in hand.

A significant step in this direction was taken by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration when it decided to invite representatives of the League of Nations Technical Organisations, the I.L.O., the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, and the United Nations Interim Commission on Food and Agriculture (or representatives from the Permanent Organisation for Food and Agriculture then represented by the Interim Commission), to attend as observers and to participate in the meetings of the Council, its committees and sub-committees, and in the meetings of regional committees and technical standing committees.

These representatives would presumably look at the problems of relief and rehabilitation from an international point of view and would not be concerned to advocate the interests of any one particular country. There is no reason why the appropriate international organisations of the labour movement should not be associated with the work of inter-governmental institutions in a similar way—either in an advisory or in an executive capacity. Representatives of international labour could bring an international attitude of mind to the discussions and could explain the views of the workers on the problems at issue—including the workers of countries that might not be directly represented in the inter-governmental organisations concerned. Of course, if the international labour movement were brought into the work in this way it would also be necessary to secure the co-operation of voluntary organisations representing other interests as well.

It will be a problem both for the labour movement and for the Governments to work out the place of the international organisations of the labour movement in relation to the task of promoting peace, economic advancement and social security by international action. The arguments for associating the Internationals with this work are strong—and not the least of them

is that the workers are intimately affected by any advances or setbacks in this field and should therefore be enabled, through their organisations, to contribute their ideas and experience. A place should accordingly be found for the Internationals, bearing in mind that they would represent the international views of labour and not the opinion of the labour movements of separate countries.

Karl Kautsky, who had helped to defeat the 'revisionists' in the days of the Second International, pointed out shortly before his death that there are some objectives in which the working class alone is interested, and others whose attainment is indispensable for other classes as well. Included amongst the latter is democracy and also the maintenance of world peace.<sup>1</sup>

In some spheres a contribution could be made by the L.S.I. on the political side; in others the appropriate bodies would be the industrial Internationals—the I.F.T.U. and the International Trade Secretariats. Broadly speaking the first would be primarily concerned with establishing freedom from fear, i.e. international political and military security, while the industrial bodies would be mainly interested in promoting freedom from want. But there is no sharp division between their interests, and in many cases the views of both the political and industrial sides would need to be taken into account. The political International could, for example, enter into relations with organs of international government, since its constituent parties have taken part in the government of their respective countries; and the trade union Internationals could develop in international affairs the collaboration between Governments, employers and workers which has been growing up in industry nationally.

It would, indeed, be strange if this industrial and political collaboration in the different countries did not find its expression in the international field. The value of the contribution which can be made to the national effort by trade unions and other working-class organisations has been amply demonstrated during the war. They have borne their share of the war's burdens in the great free democracies and played a most prominent part in the resistance movements in the countries occupied by the enemy. Will the lesson be carried over into the days of peace?

There is no lack of evidence that international labour would be willing to take a greater part in the day-to-day handling of international problems. It would not weaken in its efforts to transform the economic and social system but would work for the transformation by exercising the rights of labour as an

<sup>1</sup> Karl Kautsky: *Sozialisten und Krieg*, p. 300.

essential part of the community rather than by a violent struggle against the forces of the State as at present constituted.

In October 1941, for example, the Emergency General Council of the I.T.F. passed a resolution pointing out that the active participation of national and international trade union organisations in moral and industrial mobilisation was making an important contribution to the efficient conduct of the war; that the task of re-adapting the world's economic system to the requirements of peace was at least as difficult as the war effort itself, and would call just as much, if not more, for the effective co-operation of the organised workers; and requesting the Allied Governments 'to associate the workers organised in the trade unions affiliated to the I.T.F. in their efforts to solve transport problems, by providing for the consultation of these trade unions'.<sup>1</sup>

This was followed by another resolution in September 1943, in which the I.T.F. offered the Inter-Allied Post-War Requirements Bureau its co-operation in the work preparatory to the rehabilitation of European transport.<sup>2</sup>

And in December 1943, Tom Williamson, President of the International Federation of Employees in Public and Civil Services, wrote: 'For some years prior to the war, the Public Services International had built up strong international relationships, and was rapidly strengthening its influence, but the fact must now be faced that much of this work has been destroyed, and a new structure will need to be raised on what remains of the old. That is not to say that the future organisation should be modelled on the old. Something wider will be necessary in the kind of post-war world which democrats in all countries envisage and hope will replace the old.'<sup>3</sup>

There is already a considerable amount of experience of participation by international labour in international affairs. For one thing the I.F.T.U. and some of the International Trade Secretariats have taken an active part in promoting agreement on draft conventions and recommendations through the I.L.O. The workers' delegates to the Sessions of the International Labour Conference were always drawn from the unions in their respective countries, and the international trade union organisations were not represented as such. But it will be remembered that the I.F.T.U. and the Trade Secretariats were able to organise meetings of the workers' delegates and to hold preliminary conferences of their own for the study of questions which were to come before the International Labour Conference.<sup>4</sup> Thus the

<sup>1</sup> *I.T.F., Press Report, October 6th, 1941.*

<sup>2</sup> *I.T.F., Press Report, October 1st, 1943.*

<sup>3</sup> *Trade Union World.* I.F.T.U., London, December 1943.

<sup>4</sup> See Chapter IV, pp. 127 and 152.

officers and committees of the trade union Internationals often took an active part in I.L.O. activities as representatives of international interests rather than as delegates from separate countries.

Much experience was also gathered by members of the Executive of the L.S.I. at meetings of the Council and Assembly of the League, on League Committees, at the Disarmament Conference and at other inter-governmental gatherings. It is true that they participated in these activities as representatives of their respective Governments, but they carried with them their experience of discussions and decisions in the L.S.I. and took back to the L.S.I. the experience which they gained at the international meetings between Governments. The participation of the political and industrial internationals in these activities was indirect and incidental, but the fact that they were able and willing to participate is significant.

This work could be extended if greater official recognition were given to the Internationals as well as to the organisations of labour in the separate countries. There is, for example, much that the Internationals could do in the sphere of international administration—in connection with relief and rehabilitation, providing employment after the war, restoring industry to peacetime activity, dealing with the problems of migration and repatriation, working out schemes for public investment, organising transport and communications, and so on. All these are international as well as national problems, and there is much to be said for seeking the advice and collaboration of the international organisations of labour, instead of leaving them to press their proposals from outside.

There is also room for extended participation in what might be called the work of international legislation, for example, in the preparation of the Draft Conventions and Recommendations of the I.L.O. Proposals in this direction have been made by some of the international organisations during the war. The International Transportworkers' Federation, the Textile Workers' International, the Miners' International and the British Section of the International Metal Workers' Federation all put forward suggestions for new machinery inside the I.L.O. to handle the international problems of their respective industries. Moreover, at the meeting of the Governing Body of the I.L.O. in London in December 1943, the British Government tabled a proposal for the establishment of industrial committees in the I.L.O. to advise on the problems of these and other industries as well. The proposal was accepted in principle at the International Labour Conference in Philadelphia in 1944. At the

meeting of the Governing Body of the I.L.O. in London in January 1945 it was decided to set up international industrial committees for transport, mining, iron and steel production, the metal trades, textiles, petroleum and building, civil engineering and public works. The committees were to comprise representatives of Governments, employers and workers and were to be world-wide. The development of specialised arrangements for dealing with these questions is bound to give increased scope for practical work by the International Trade Secretariats in the industries concerned.

There is, then, considerable scope for discussion as to what the future functions of the Internationals should be. Those who have been dissatisfied with the record of the international labour movement in the past must say what they expect it to do. It is a question for the Internationals themselves, and for their critics. It is also a matter of interest to the Governments of the separate countries and to the international organisations set up by the Governments. Are the Internationals to be expected to organise world revolution or to work for a fundamental transformation of society by peaceful change? Are they to rely in the main upon protest and agitation, or are they to claim and secure the right to exercise more responsibility in the actual handling of affairs? On the answers to these questions the whole future of the international labour movement may depend.





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